

EMPOWERING FAMILIES; TRANSFORMING LIVELIHOODS

ANNUAL REPORT 2009





2009 Annual Report

Empowering Families; Transforming Livelihoods

AFARD'S DRIVERS

VISION

"A Prosperous, Healthy and Informed People of West Nile".

MISSION

"To contribute to the moulding of a region in which the local people, including those who are marginalized, are able to participate effectively and sustainably and take a lead in the development of the region".

VALUES & PRINCIPLES

- Respecting human dignity, equality, justice and freedom.
- The enshrinement of the empowerment approach.
- Adopting an interactive and flexible approach.
- Local ownership by groups of whatever initiatives they are involved in.
- Use of participatory methodologies in all activities.
- Reliance on local resources including ITK, human and physical resources.
- Localizing research aimed at generating local area sensitive interventions.
- Genuine partnership based on mutual trust, respect and honesty.
- Linkage and collaboration with like-minded stakeholders, and
- Transparency and accountability

Contents

FROM THE BOARD	3
MANAGEMENT INSIGHTS	4
GETTING IT RIGHT: FROM RESEARCH TO INTERVENTION	5
THE WEST NILE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (WENDI) PROGRAMME	7
FARMING AS A BUSINESS & A SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT	8
VALUE ADDITION MEANS INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY	9
COMMUNITY MICROFINANCING: RESISTANCE TO EXCLUSION AND EXPLOITATION	10
FROM CURATIVE TO COMMUNITY PREVENTIVE HEALTH	11
YOUTHS AND HIV/AIDS PREVENTION	12
COMMUNITY CARE AND SUPPORT – HIV/AIDS MITIGATION STRATEGY	13
Women's Voices Counts: Engendering Decentralization	14
BUILDING VILLAGE ASSOCIATIONS' INTO FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE AGENCIES	16
Money Management Matters: Promoting Financial Prudence	17
DEEPENING ACCOUNTABILITY	19
Management Report – Perspective on Organizational Development	20
FINANCIAL REPORT, 2009	22
A Brief Outlook into 2010	24
	MANAGEMENT INSIGHTS GETTING IT RIGHT: FROM RESEARCH TO INTERVENTION THE WEST NILE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (WENDI) PROGRAMME FARMING AS A BUSINESS & A SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT VALUE ADDITION MEANS INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY COMMUNITY MICROFINANCING: RESISTANCE TO EXCLUSION AND EXPLOITATION FROM CURATIVE TO COMMUNITY PREVENTIVE HEALTH. YOUTHS AND HIV/AIDS PREVENTION. COMMUNITY CARE AND SUPPORT — HIV/AIDS MITIGATION STRATEGY. WOMEN'S VOICES COUNTS: ENGENDERING DECENTRALIZATION. BUILDING VILLAGE ASSOCIATIONS' INTO FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE AGENCIES MONEY MANAGEMENT MATTERS: PROMOTING FINANCIAL PRUDENCE DEEPENING ACCOUNTABILITY MANAGEMENT REPORT — PERSPECTIVE ON ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT. FINANCIAL REPORT, 2009





FROM THE BOARD

The Board approved the 2009 Plan and Budget of AFARD in its annual meeting in December 2008. This plan was innovative for two reasons. First, it targetted for the first time an outreach into 3 districts (Nebbi, Arua and Yumbe) in West Nile region. Second, it identified a critical strategy of empowering largely rural marginalized communities to transform their efforts through self-reliance for local development.

This paradigm shift away from 'donors and government will solve our problems' came a long way in inspiring the hitherto known as lazy and unwise 'peasants' into tapping on their land and family labour as the best conduit for achieving a secure and sustainable livelihood now and in the future. But what did this entail? First, getting the basics of poor people's livelihoods right through participatory research; and, utilizing a truly bottom-up planning and implementation approach. Through a transparent and accountable partnership with the beneficiary villages, donors, and local government, AFARD allowed its grassroot partners to control and account for funds and results. This is contrary to the norm that local groups hardly understand money and should be handed over ready made products like seeds, farm tools, and livestock.

To affirm AFARD's commitment, the Board in the year appointed a new audit firm—KPMG. This firm audited the 2008 Financial Statement and found it representing the true financial status. Some of its management advices such as improving the accounting software for better vouching and instituting an accountability form were also adopted. The Board has also approved a Human Resource Policy and Board Assessment Guidelines. It also conducted a Board appraisal exercise aimed at improving its services delivery capacity. The Board is in the process of formulating a Communications strategy, Resource Mobilization strategy, and HIV/AIDS Workplace Policy as well as reviewing the current Strategic Direction.

No doubt, AFARD's footprints are visible wherever it is operational. An AFARD Complex that will be its headquarters is under construction in Nebbi Town. Large farm sizes at group and household levels planted with improved (but not GMO) seeds and planting materials are a common sight. Imagine, Anyegele has 15 acres of land under different crops! With Community Health Frontline Advisors trained for all partner villages, home hygiene and sanitation improved in all beneficiary households. Equally, there is a high awareness about HIV/AIDS with unmet demand for HIV/AIDS testing. Village credit schemes exist in all groups and in Murusi parish from this scheme an innovative community education fund was set up. Yet, with active engagement with local governments, community and women's voices are starting to count in poverty resource allocations and disbursements.

As a Board, we therefore acknowledge the unreserved support of the district local governments of Nebbi, Yumbe and Arua as well as that of Moyo for allowing AFARD to expand into Obongi sub county come 2010.

Finally, we gratefully thank the donors – Gorta, European Commission, Civil Society Fund, the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Kampala, and Manos Unidas - who partnered with us in 2009. We also appreciate the unreserved commitment of the Founder Members of AFARD. It is also our humble appeal that AFARD is a vital, reliably tested, and valid entry point for development agencies committed to positive results in the West Nile region. Supporting AFARD will increase outreaches that catalyze opportunities for a dignified life in this poverty striken region.

Rev. Fr. Geoffery Ocamgiu *Chair, Board of Directors*

MANAGEMENT INSIGHTS



The year 2009 was an ardous but also an exciting one. Foremost, it started with a more guaranteed funding base that relieved the usual heartache of resource mobilization. This assured funds crystalized AFARD's vision of operating in West Nile not through a contractual arrangement but in its own right. Gorta provided this opportunity through the West Nile Development Initiative (WENDI) programme that is currently operational in Nebbi, Arua and Yumbe districts, but will spill over into Moyo District in 2010.

Second, WENDI programme further provided AFARD with the opportunity to implement a holistic area-based development intervention. It also enhanced internal programme leverage thereby improving cross-skilling among staffs. WENDI focuses on food and income security, human development and good governance using a household approach. This is contrary to the traditional standalone donor funding approaches.

Third, with a bigger activity portfolio came an increase not only in the budget but also in the workforce. While the budget increased from UGX 1.5 bn in 2008 to UGX UGX 5.5 bn in 2009, the number of staffs too increased from 9 in 2008 to 13 in 2009 with Field Officers alone increasing from 4-7. This explains in part why AFARD's presence among its beneficiaries is increasingly visible.

Fourth, while bigger programme means increased spending pressure, AFARD management took a critical and bold decision to trascend the narrow focus on project deliverable – outputs; an approach that has for long left our poor people even poorer. By working from an impact focus, both AFARD and the beneficiaries committed to 'outcomes and impacts' as the critical basis for further partnership. Field Officers were tagged to groups and a jointly agreed upon Organizational and Model Home/Village Complaince Checklist set the basis for routine monitoring and accountability.

Fifth, financial sustainability building has been a major challenge in development work. Often, projects end without meaningful continuity systems. Therefore, our expectation was that beneficiary groups would take their first year of partnership as a year of self –awakening and fighting household food security. We noted with pleasure that, by the end of the year, almost all of the 51 groups had 'resilience funds' which they are growing through credit schemes and investments. The minimal amount a BO has is UGX 5 million while majority have UGX 7 million and over.

In all, the end of year review has revealed that the hunger for change that was ignited in the marginalized communities is bearing fruits. Many households (53% from 44%) were able to afford three descent meals a day even when drought struck the region. Psychosocial satisfaction and the social safety net system which was destroyed by poverty is starting to coagulate once more. Social capital is strong while the Post Test Clubs have grown stronger to care and support for Persons Living With HIV/AIDS (PLWAs) and Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) without waiting for government to do it all for them.

With unwavering support and commitment from the partners – grassroot communities, local governments, and donors without doubt AFARD will inspire many comunities to build sustainable villages for themselves and their (grand) children. In this way, AFARD will have contributed positively to the realization of the Millenium Development Goals as well as the National Development Plan and the West Nile region's Districts Development Plans.

Dr. Alfred Lakwo
Programme Director



GETTING IT RIGHT: FROM RESEARCH TO INTERVENTION

Participatory poverty assessment is sufficient to the extent that it gives voices to the poor to analyse their livelihood dynamics both ex ante for planning and ex post for monitoring and evaluation. However, the question of scope requires the ability to show the extent to which, for instance, food insecurity is prevalent. This is why AFARD conducted impact-based baseline studies. Conducted participatorily by AFARD, local government officials, and beneficiary communities, these studies aimed at unraveling existing knowledge, attitude and practices as well as the status of livelihood insecurity.

In all, five baseline studies were conducted, namely: (i) the Royal Netherlands Embassy, Kampala - funded safe water and sanitation baseline study in Akworo; (ii) Manos Unidas - funded agro-technology and food security assessment in Jangokoro; (iii) the Delegation of European Commission in Uganda - supported the study of grassroots women's participation in local governance as well as women leaders political capabilities; (iv) the Africa Studies Center, Leiden - supported studies into entreprenuership; and (v) Gorta - funded WENDI programme baseline study.

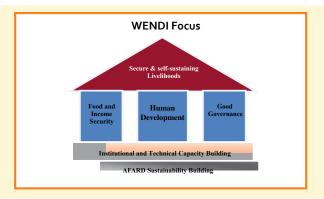
The key findings from the last two studies were:

- In terms of quality of life, AFARD's beneficiaries (7,583 households with 48,726 people) are largely poor people. Only 1.4% reside in permanent housing units, 73% use local paraffin lamps for lighting, 95% use firewood for cooking, 80% rely on their foot as the main means of transport, while only 38% and 20% have a radio and a mobile phone respectively. Besides, few households are able to buy direly needed necessities like foods (sugar 28% and meat 19%) and pay for basic services like medical (30%) and education (20%) costs with ease.
- Although the majority (92%) primarily depend on farming as their main source of livelihood, only 3.8% had access to extension services. More than 80% of whatever crops grown and 99% of the livestock reared were local varieties and breeds. Not surprising, the use of improved agronomic, environmental conservation and better livestock husbandry practices were limited. Meanwhile, only 42% ate balanced diet.
- Many households had not diversified their livelihood activities in order to smoothen their incomes and consumptions and accumulate assets to buffer future risks. Only 24.1% had businesses, which they operate mainly as informal enterprises (84%). Yet, many (57%) depended on group loans however small the loan sizes were (UGX 75,700 or €30 equivalent because of limited loan portfolio).
- Concerning safe sanitation and water chain management, only 33% used safe water sources. Vector control and safe home hygiene were poorly practiced. For instance, less than 50% used mosquito nets; and latrine safety was only 28%. The result was that 37% of the people were always sick mainly (85%) from unsafe water and sanitation related sicknesses among which malaria topped (65% among children). Households therefore lost averagely 8 productive days to sicknesses and UGX 16,470 on medical bills.
- HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation remains a daunting task, as only 58% of the people rightly knew HIV/AIDS as a germ. 51% knew at least 3 modes of transmission; 62% at least 3 symptoms; 54% at least 3 modes of prevention; 55% knew at least 3 methods of positive living; and 40% at least 3 support services. Yet, 10.2% of these old people still had casual sexual partners and only 15.3% used condoms.

- While 85.5% of children 4-19 years old were enrolled in school, only 75.5% were attending regularly. Meanwhile 7.6% and 28.8% had already dropped out at primary and post-primary levels respectively simply because Universal Education Policy is after all not free. Further, only 3.4% of the population have vocational skills with which they can enter into the (in) formal job market.
- Although the BOs are the critical conduit for local development both as outreach strategies now and future cohesion points for sustainability, the BO Compliance Check found that 61% were still in their nascent stage of development.
- Active citizenship and political participation was also found wanting. Only 38.9%, 28.3% and 23.8% of BO members had participated in the 2008/09 local government planning, implementation and monitoring processes respectively. Similarly, only a few were benefiting from projects in the areas of agriculture (33.0%), water and sanitation (32.1%), education (35.1%), and HIV/AIDS (13.5%). As a result, 28.6% believed that government resources meant to fight poverty were not allocated to pro-poor people's needs and 19.5% contended that their local governments were simply not accountable.
- Expectedly, for women, their elected leaders both as councillors and women council executives are under performing their mandatory roles: (i) Only 51% of women councillors were aware that they were required to keep in close consultation with their electoral areas. Yet, only a paltry 3% were aware that they were to use their skills for the development of their areas; (ii) Only 59% of Women Council Executives knew their roles of identifying women needs and none knew that for policy sensitization. Likewise, 48% were performing identification of women's needs; and (iii) None of the women leadership structure scored 50% in having any core political capabilities e.g., skills for mobilization, communication, information management, planning & budgeting, monitoring & evaluation, advocacy, and alliance building.

Observations from the studies

These studies revealed that, first, the much hyped economic development (and or poverty reduction) of Uganda has not reached all corners of the country equitably. Such inequality cast doubts as to whether Uganda may achieve the much-cherished Millenium Development Goal (MDGs). Second, it shows that majority of the people in West Nile are engrossed in insecure livelihoods. As such, any intervention to ameliorate such noted livelihood insecurities will require sustainable and integrated development approach that avoids compartmentalization of support like traditional projects do. Important is also that the very efforts of the deserving poor should be energized. This explains why AFARD is zealous of an empowering self-reliance approach that enables poor people to take their destiny in their hands.



THE WEST NILE DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE (WENDI) PROGRAMME

In 2008, AFARD and Gorta agreed to undertake an area-based integrated development programme in West Nile region. Why? Because West Nile region has 6 in every 10 people living on less than US\$1 a day. And Gorta had tested AFARD's competency and commitment since 2000. Finally, Gorta had realized that small fragmented projects suffered from inability to achieve Visibility, Impacts and Sustainability.

Arising from the above, WENDI was developed cardinally to fight the multi-faceted nature of hunger. During the participatory planning process, communities defined hunger as the lack of: (i) adequate food with which to nurture their lives – food insecurity; (ii) Safe water with which to prepare the food, wash hands clean to eat, and drink after a nice meal – safe water insecurity; (iii) Knowledge about what a good food is; (iv) Knowledge to transform a nourished body into a productive asset – education and employment insecurity; and (v) Collective action to sustain local aspirations for own development side by active engagement with local governments that are mandated to deliver services to their constituencies – organizational and good governance insecurity.

The aspirations of the communities that were in line with the Millenium Development Goals (MDGs), the National Development Plan framework; the various District Development Plans, and AFARD's vision for a prosperous, healthy and informed people of West Nile are aimed at fighting food and income insecurity; human underdevelopment; and bad governance. These three issues are the pillars of WENDI; anchored on organizational and technical competencies and a sustainable AFARD (beyond Gorta funding).

Thus, WENDI is a 7-year result-driven, self-help-based, and local effort-demanding programme funded by Gorta and is implemented by AFARD to transform the livelihoods of the people in West Nile. It complements local government efforts. WENDI aims at 'empowering rural marginalized communities in West Nile to transform their energies for the attainment of secure and self-sustaining livelihoods'. That the programme strives for Visibility, Impacts and sustainability, WENDI envisages 'Active citizens who are able to sustainably and equitably": Eat nutritious foods – Food Security; Live in descent homes and accumulate adequate financial and material assets – Economic Security; Suffer less from preventable morbidity and mortality – Health Security; Attain literacy and vocational skills – Education security; and Exhibit voice and choice in the governance of their groups and communities – Organizational and Good governance security.

This explains why WENDI targets marginalized communities and interest groups especially in an entire village because of cost-effectiveness, bigger outreach and visibility, consolidated impacts, stronger social cohesion and bigger chances of sustainability. These beneficiaries are identified together with local governments to avoid self-seekers and Godfather syndrome. However, the beneficiaries are those who are: concerned about their specific development problems; doing something, however small, about those problems; willing to welcome and try new ideas for improving their livelihoods; and yearning to live a better life without the common mentality of 'government must provide a handout'.

In sum, in 2009, 51 beneficiary organizations (BOs) were partnered with. UGX 4.3 billion was disbursed by Gorta for WENDI and the BOs directly spent UGX 1.7 billion on their individual small projects targeting livelihoods transformation in 7,583 households (with 48,726 people mainly females (52%), married (83%), and youths (41%)).







FARMING AS A BUSINESS AND A SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT

The traditional farming practices

Typically, farming in West Nile bears subsistence characteristics. Farm land sizes per households are extremely small (often a quarter of an acre). Crops grown are largely indigenous varieties and to a large extent recommended agronomic practices are not adhered to. Besides, crop farming is gendered with women planting mainly food crops and men, cash crops. While labour is shared on the different crop farms, cash benefits are exclusively the preserve of men. And, crops depend entirely on rainfall.

Not surprising, yields were lower; food stock greatly inadequate; and farm incomes declining over the years. Thus, crop farmers have continued to experience increasing levels of poverty. Many, especially the youths, felt it better to migrate to urban areas even if they hardly had any chance of getting waged employment.

A changing farming landscape

With funding from Gorta and Manos Unidas (JACA), AFARD focused on transforming households' food and income security through farming with a new outlook of farming as a business. By increasing access to improved agro-technologies (seeds, planting materials, tools, and the associated skills) many households maximized their labor for increased production. It is now common sight in all 7,583 benefiting households to find one acre of land under cassava alone and other additional acreage under other crops.

The increase in farm acreage has gone hand in hand with changing the perception of farming away from a subsistence venture into a commercial enterprise. Such a change has been enabled by the global blurredness between food and cash crops. Further, the commercial orientation was also inspired by the realization that a household can not produce all the food it wants. It inevitably must be able to access additional food (just like other basic needs) from the market. Thus, a food secure home is that with both adequate production and purchasing power to buy food. As such, farmers now know that good crops are those that will provide good yields (for food reserves) as well as have market (to bring in cash income).

Such a shift has changed the gender roles of crop farming. Women have taken on new entries into the market economy away from the old status of being relegated into food crop farmers and controllers. Both women and men now grow food and cash crops. They also now sell crops and keep money therefrom without the hussle of whose money it is as was in the past. Likewise, many youths in the villages are starting to shun urban migration given that they are able to make money from farming as compared to urban unemployment and the crimes and social humilation it carries.







VALUE ADDITION MEANS INCREASED PRODUCTIVITY

Subsistence farming, marginal income

The success of farming as a business (for poverty reduction eventually) is contingent on how farmers' productivity is enhanced. This involves increasing yields and improving market returns. To the contrary, subsistence farming focuses on survivalist strategies. The July 2009 baseline survey produced by AFARD revealed that crop yields were only 25% of improved agro-technology estimates. Meanwhile, 4 and 8 in 10 households did not earn any income at all from crop and livestock farming respectively. Majority of the households earned only up to UGX 100,000 (€40).

Other than low yields, part of the low market returns to farmers in the region is because farmers are largely marketing their products alone (79%). These products are sold raw (100%) more so in small quantities (76%) as and when they harvest (56%). Impliedly, there is marginal value addition in the farming sector; a practice that makes farmers vulnerable to middlemen who thrive on farm-gate price manipulations.

Initiatives to add value to farm produce

In the year, two approaches were promoted. First, bulk marketing was tried in Okuvuru, Lodonga, and Chongambe. In these groups, members bring together whatever they have produced to add onto what they have harvested from the group plots. With more produce to sell, they have been able to identify buyers and negotiate better prices for their produce. For instance, while Congambe was able to sell their beans at UGX 2,000 per kilogram, their neighbour Utimkisa and JODPAC craving to get easy cash sold theirs at only UGX 1,200 per kilogram.

Second, processing was piloted in Nyaravur and Odokibo Agricultural Training Centre. These institutions are processing maize and rice respectively. They are packaging in well labelled gunny bags and selling through different micro-supply points. In the case for Nyaravur with 67 member households, the establishment of the maize mill has energized members to grow more maize (average of 1.5 acres per household). As the members remarked,

We are growing more maize to ensure that our mill works non-stop. But it is also to increase our household incomes given that there is ready market for the maize. We will no longer be cheated by imposters who used to dictate prices for us. in the end, both our households and our association will have good money and a better future.

Nyaravur now boast of having saved UGX 3.5 million while ensuring that it injected UGX 1.5 million in its 77 acreas of land planted with maize and UGX 2 million in its credit scheme; and setting linkages with other Nebbi network members to grow maize aware that they will procure all their harvests at fair prices. Thus, in terms of organizational ability to withstand shocks, Nyaravur is at a take-off stage.







COMMUNITY MICROFINANCING: RESISTANCE TO EXCLUSION AND EXPLOITATION

Livelihood diversification is a key to secure livelihoods

Microfinace has won credits for its role in catalyzing the entreprenuerial skills of the poor to fight poverty. It provides poor people with the opportunity to diversify their livelihood activities. However, AFARD is operating in rural marginalized areas where the outreach of formal microfinance institutions (MFIs) is limited. High transation costs due to poor infrastructures has made many MFIs to concentrate mainly in urban centers. Yet, the popular SACCO approach has equally excluded many poor people given that they do not have the ready money with which to buy shares – the only license to becoming members and accessing loans. But, should poor people wait until they can fit within the formal microfinance hub? No. To ensure that poor people do not only depend on subsistence farming, something had to be done.

Local capitalization; local ownership

Unlike formal MFIs that are easily capitalized for their 'money lending businesses', poor people can hardly access such capital, for they lack not only the skills to develop sound business plans but also the connection with 'big wigs'. All they have is their social capital. Thus, the big village membership of a minimum of 100 households provided just that perfect opportunity for mobilizing own capital.

In the year, 46 Beneficiary Organizations initiated their own Group Loan Fund for operating their member owned credit schemes with UGX 72,207,610 from their local resource mobilization and additional WENDI booster funds. By having every household pay a membership fee of UGX 10,000 and a monthly subscription fee of UGX 1,000 - 5,000 many Beneficiary Organizations were able to start a Group Loan Fund.

As at December 31, 2009, the Beneficiary Organizations were circulating UGX 190 million (72% locally generated) among themselves. The loan period is an average of 2 months and the interest rate is 9%. The number of loanees has also reached 2,812 people (54.8% women). With a very high repayment rate (97%), Beneficiary Organizations are able to allocate 7% of their interest incomes to support Persons Living with AIDS (PLWAs) to monthly receive Anti-Retroviral Treatment as far as 100Kms away and Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) to access education. Likewise, the loan has enabled many households to start small businesses from which they are able to meet their household needs with ease. A few households are also accumulating physical assets like bicycles, cows, radios, and household wares.

This is true micro-financing from below; a run away from the popular modern commercial microfinance system where poor people at the bottom of the pyramid help make fortunes for a few rich people and institutions at the peak of the pyramid. It is a popular resistance to exclusion by MFIs. However, fundamentally it is about ownership and control of money contrary to the held view that poor people are lazy and hardly know money and money management.







FROM CURATIVE TO COMMUNITY PREVENTIVE HEALTH

The health situation in West Nile

According to the 2006 Uganda National Household Survey 2005/06, the people of West Nile (located in northern Uganda) are the poorest in Uganda. Equally, the 2008 West Nile profiling report showed that West Nile region is characterized by underachievement in health sector given that many people still live outside the 5Km radius of a health facility. The few available health facilities are poorly staffed with a minimum of 27, 000 people per doctor. Yet, the leading causes of both morbidity and mortality – like malaria, gastro intestinal infections – are preventable. Not surprising, under-5 mortality and maternal mortality rates are exceptionally high meanwhile life expectancy in the region is 40 years, yet an average Ugandan lives for at least 52 years. In such a scenario, it is saddening to note that many people die young; at the prime of their ages.

The above situation arises due to, in part, government's skewed health focus to facility-based approach (curative medicine). Preventive health services are not a priority in terms of funding. Community energies for self-management of their safe health is not given the due attention it deserves. It is also due to the limited community responses as many are unaware of the health risks they can avert through proper health behaviours.

Changing responsibilities - Community Management of Preventive Health

AFARD has learnt that given a chance, communities can take a lead in managing their health through preventive approaches. This requires establishing and supporting local (behaviour) change agents; provision of key inputs that families alone can not afford; and setting standards that are policed by the community in conformity with the legal framework of Uganda.

In the year, AFARD undertook to implement this change strategy by:

- Drilling 29 boreholes and augering 2 shallow wells in Nebbi and Yumbe districts under the technical supervision of the District Water Officers. These safe water sources, termed community wide projects, had their Facility Management Committees elected and trained in community based finance system. All have saved funds for O+M and will open facility bank accounts in their nearest banks in line with the Ministry guidelines.
- Procuring and distributing, with basic education, 22,895 insecticide treated mosquito nets to
 every benefiting households according to their existing bed capacity and in conformity with the
 social practices in the areas.
- Training 255 Community Health Frontline Advisors (CHFAs) in basic sanitation and HIV/AIDS education. These CHFAs are charged with assessing health needs, conducting health education, demonstrating exemplary leadership, advocating for a healthy community, and enforcing community bye-law.

As a result, 78% of AFARD outreach households have latrines, 77% have garbage pits and 27% of beneficiary household heads have conducted HIV/AIDS sero-status test. This has been achieved through routine BO members' education, home visits, support by local council's, and adaptations of posters to local situations. Malaria incidence has also been reported to have declined among children.







YOUTHS AND HIV/AIDS PREVENTION

Pakwach Town Council is the entry point into West Nile, Sourthern Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo. During the last 22 years of Lords' Resistance Army (LRA) war, it was the epicenter of travellers convoy. Long trucks and even passenger commuters packed in the town for days. Such a scenario created a fluid flux of population. Faced with increasing decline in fish catch, the rate of transactional and transgenerational unsafe sex increased especially among the youths. Current sero-positivity rate stands at about 20% over and above the national staggering average of 6.7%. This status explains why in 2009 a deliberate move was taken to engage the youths as agents for their change and hence the support to Jonam Youth Development Initiative (JOYODI).

What has been done this far

From April 2009, JOYODI was able to identify, train and support 96 Village Volunteers (VVs) as frontline service providers to youths in the 48 villages of the town. Additionally, 20 VVs were trained in drama skills and 400 youths were trained in basic life skills. A Youth Centre (phase 1) was also constructed at Kapita and equipped as a one-stop center for youth friendly services. This center was officially opened by His Grace, Henry Luke Orombi on the December 22, 2009.

Through the VVs, a number of activities to promote positive behavior change (sexual practices) are ongoing. Routine peer education and counselling is the order of the day. A total of 37 village level seminars complemented by video shows, drama shows, and posters continued to deepen the knowledge about HIV/AIDS.

As a result, JOYODI ably educated 8,910 people (2,445 females); counselled 2,559 people (1,252 females); supported 22 mobile VCT that tested 466 people (342 females) with 25 found sero-positive (20 females); and referred to the health centre 56 people (25 females). A post test club was also formed as the centrifugal point for a sustainable community care and support services for persons living with HIV / AIDS and Orphans / vulnerable children.

In all, JOYODI has built a credible profile of providing youth-friendly HIV/AIDS prevention services to the communities within the most pandemic area of Pakwach Town Council. With the Youth centre in place, what remains is deepening and improving the quality of services. The acquisition of testing facilities and personnel, integration of Post Test Club activities for positive living and community care and support as well as economic empowerment will go a long way in enhancing the prevention and mitigation of HIV/AIDS among the youths in this epicenter of HIV/AIDS in Jonam county.







COMMUNITY CARE AND SUPPORT — HIV/AIDS MITIGATION STRATEGY

In 2008, AFARD signed a Memorundum of Understanding with Civil Society Fund (CSF) to undertake a 2-year project aimed at preventing sexual transmission of HIV/AIDS among the 5 epi-center fishing communities with 12 satellite fishing villages in Panyimur sub county. A review of the project in April 2009 showed that attention to prevention without addressing the sustainable mitigation of HIV/AIDS is equally counter productive.

Having learnt lessons from Irish Aid and Gorta funding that effective prevention are those mainstreamed with mitigation measures, the project adopted a flexible approach to the promotion of community care and support as an integral part of the prevention behavior change communication and education.

In Panyimur Sub County alone, the Fisher Community Anti-AIDS Project (FiCAP) established 5 Post Test Clubs (PTCs) and WENDI has been supporting 2 old PTCs as is shown in the table below.

Status of PTC outreach and support

Status of TTC outreach and support										
Name of	Number of satellite villages	Post Test Club membership			Number of PLWA			Number of	Amount	Average
fishing village		Males	Females	Total	Males	Females	Total	OVCs supported	saved (UGX)	monthly support offered (UGX)
Dei	5	101	118	219	18	29	47	149	52,000,000	250,000
Lokokura	3	25	64	89	18	46	64	100	26,830,000	353,000
Kayonga	6	23	37	60	5	6	11	34	2,170,000	45,000
Angumu	4	24	34	58	7	14	21	3	2,741,000	75,000
Wathparwoth	6	33	39	72	9	22	31	20	3,756,000	50,000
Wangkadu	6	28	36	64	9	15	28	4	2,575,000	50,000
Mututu	6	39	68	107	15	20	35	4	2,482,000	80,000
Totals	36	273	396	669	81	152	237	314	92,554,000	903,000

In the PTCs, community education about HIV/AIDS and positive living is provided. Joint counselling sessions are also held for Persons Living with HIV/AIDS (PLWA). Using a roaster drawn from the planned visits to ART Centers, the various PTCs have been enabled to ensure that all PLWA access ART as and when it was planned. And from the PTCs' savings-cum-revolving fund, monthly financial support is provided to PLWAs. This scheme is also providing household economic empowerment; thus enabling access to basic needs.

With the fund, PTCs are also able to provide descent burials to member PLWA who have died. Such social cohesion has helped reduce self and community stigma given that HIV/AIDS is seen as everybody's responsibility. It has also widened the perspective with which HIV/AIDS is seen. AIDS is no longer a health issue per se. Rather, it is also a social, economic, and political issue.

Through this PTC approach, AFARD and the community in Panyimur during the commemoration of the 2009 World AIDS Day demonstrated that they have built a sustainable social system where the community takes it upon themselves to prevent the further spread of HIV/AIDS as well as to mitigate its effects without waiting for donors or government to do it for them.





Women's voices counts: engendering decentralization

In November 24, 2008, AFARD signed a Memorundum of Understanding with the Delegation of European Commission to Uganda for a 34-month funding (90% of €372,427) towards the Engendering Decentralized Poverty Resource Management Project in the 6 Sub Counties of Drajini Akworo, Panyimur, Pakwach, Nyaravur, and Jangokoro in Yumbe and Nebbi districts respectively. The overall objective of the project is that," Lower Local Governments (LLGs) in the selected West Nile districts of Nebbi and Yumbe provide gender sensitive and equitable services to the community." Full project implementation however started in January 2009 as funds was disbursed in December 2008.

The project grounding

In order to effectively achieve the desired goal, this project started with a baseline survey to establish: (i) the level of and reasons for women's participation in lower local government planning and budgeting processes; and (ii) the civic engagement capacity of women leaders. Findings from this survey revealed that:

- Many grassroots women are 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 meetings to only 4% monitoring LLG budgets.
- 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. Yet, only a paltry 3% were aware that they were to use their skills for the development of their areas.
- Only 59% of Women Council Executives knew their roles of identifying women needs and none
 knew that for policy sensitization. Likewise, 48% were performing identification of women's
 needs; the needs they hardly carried forward to any other level of government or development
 partners for support. And none was engaged in policy sensitization.
- Concerning political capabilities, women leaders were also found lacking almost all core
 civic engagement skills. All scores were under 50% in skills for mobilization, communication,
 information management, planning & budgeting, monitoring & evaluation, advocacy, and
 alliance building.

Part of the reasons advanced for such incapacitation to effective women's representation in the decentralized political arena and development processes were: Less coordination between women leaders; lack of leadership induction; inadequate support from district women leadership; illiteracy among many women; poor mobilization for and conduct of local government meetings; and unfulfilled budgetary promises. These have overtime accumulated into 'participation fatigue'.

The project deliverables

In order to make effective women leaders' representation, the project:

- Established Women Forum as a coodination institution in all project sub counties.
- Developed political capability building training manuals and trained 14 Trainers.
- Trained 240 women and local government leaders each in human and women's rights; Community mobilization and communication skills; Gender Responsive Planning and Budgeting (GRPB); Advocacy skills; Participatory gender monitoring and evaluation (PGME); Gender Responsiveness Audit; and Documentation for change skills. A training follow up was also conducted to ascertain training efficacy.
- Conducted 6 budget awareness meetings at sub county levels and 23 meetings at parish levels.
- Improved on the mobilization of community participation in local govenment budget process through the provision of 272 bicycles; 250 T-shirts and caps; 23 drama shows by Ker Alur Cultural Troupe and the Queen of Heaven Women's club, 10,000 leaflets and 2,500 brochures and 2hrs radio talk shows.
- Supported Parish and Sub county Women Forum to hold meetings in order for women at village to sub county levels to articulate their priority needs. And the Forums were helped to participate in sectoral committee meetings where local government resources are allocated.

Results this far

From the various activities undertaken, women voices are beginiing to echo and be heard within the male dominated decentralized governance. The Women Forum has managed to bring together the hitherto quarrelsome women leaders to appreciate the common front and interest – women constituency – they ought to rally behind. This harmonization has led to regular meetings of Women leaders and easy mobilization of grassroot women to discuss issues that affect them. For the 2010 financial year, women leaders won 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 was allocated for the renovation of the labour ward and the purchase of an ambulance bicycle.

Conclusion

In sum, 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 thereby perpetuating 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 equitably.







BUILDING VILLAGE ASSOCIATIONS INTO FINANCIALLY SUSTAINABLE AGENCIES

The nature of many small project fundings have been that of 'donors give and groups take'. When the giving ceases groups are at halt waiting for yet another donor to comeby and lend a helping hand. Such a shortfall has been in programme designs that explicitly look at giving skills as in itself adequate to sustain the running of groups. To the contrary, evidences show that skills without the requisite inputs can not translate into better livelihoods. For instance, in the farming sector a one-off provision of skills alone without the associated improved seeds may not get farmers to have better food security within 2-3 farming cycles.

Nevertheless, fundamentally the gap has been the downplaying of financial sustainability in favor of institutional sustainability in project designs. Reaching out to households through a community group is assumed will continue to ensure that the group grows. From 2004, AFARD learnt that many group members simply want to use groups as a risk-pooling unit for the satisfaction of their individual needs. Should one desire better agro-technology, accessing such through the group would adequately reduce the member's commitment to the group. Afterall, his/her immediate problem is solved. Yet, should the funding exit many such households revert back to their original food insecurity status.

The new design

Aware that every project is time bound, yet secure livelihoods require sustainable impacts, in 2009 AFARD adopted a new approach to funding beneficiary groups. Other than committing to positive impacts at the household levels, every group is required to commit to raising on its own UGX 5 million in year 1, UGX 10 million in year 2, and UGX 20 million in year 3 whereafter a slow exit strategy is initiated.

To operationalize such a commitment, all the BOs were trained in resource mobilization strategies. This training used the findings of a rapid assessment of how BOs were raising money which revealed that there were 8 different strategies in use, namely: mandatory fees (membership registration fee, annual subscription fee, and monthly contributions); group farming; trade; fees for services (like hiring out labor, fee for using Boer goats), credit scheme, contracts with local governments, fund raising events, and cost saving measures. There were attempts contrary to 'donors will giveth more and more' mentality.

The outcomes

At the 2010 planning process in November 2009, the 82 BOs had already accummulated UGX 376,984,416 (€139,624) representing an average of UGX 4.6 million (€1,703). With additional money expected from sales of harvest from group garden, many BOs will meet the year 1 ceiling of UGX 5 million. Some hard working BOs like Okuvuru, Matu, Mungulonyo, Congambe, and Dei Post Test Club had surpassed the ceiling by far (with more than UGX 10 million).

In this way, the path for WENDI exit is being laid as the programme looks at decreasing it's size of giving while the BOs increase their share of local resources thereby enabling uptake of new BOs (distributional justice of poverty resources).







Money management matters: promoting financial prudence

The primary beneficiaries of AFARD work are the members of poor households that are organized into Beneficiary Organisations (BOs). While at the household level much is expected in terms of livelihood transformation, at the group level we expect growth indicated by, among others, the adoption of organizational best practices and the acquisition of key assets. The livelihood transformation in households and the growth at group level can only occur, and will be sustained, if the BOs are empowered. One area for empowering BOs is in financial management.

In order to bolster the independence that each BO has in planning for whatever activities it deems critical in helping its members walk out of livelihood insecurity, AFARD directly disburses funds meant to execute such plans to BO bank accounts. This is contrary to the traditional practice whereby BOs simply present their needs and support agencies procure everything for them. BO members would simply receive seeds or livestock without knowing the price and ado of having such supplies delivered to them. They are denied the opportunity to acquire key management skills, for instance, procurement skills, learning to conform to accountability requirements, but above all, how to handle community needs collectively. However, the empowerment approach chosen by AFARD is not without challenges.

The challenges

While AFARD provides the BOs with the funds together with the fund management training and guidelines, to the contrary some financial mismanagement practices were identified as some BOs:

- a) Failure to interpret approved plans: Funds were withdrawn without adhering to approved plans and budgets.
- b) Failure to follow set procedures: Funds were withdrew funds without the approval of members.
- c) Falsified accounts: especially on realizing that they used funds inappropriately.
- d) Conflict of roles: Between the Chairpersons, Treasurers and Procurement Committees.
- e) *Mistrust in the bank*: And they decided to either withdraw all the funds on account or simply not to go and withdraw their funds.

Entrenching prudent financial management

The results of the above financial abuses were:

- (i) Under procurement of inputs contrary to the approved quantities;
- ii) Procurement and planting of seeds that were not included in the plan and for which no training was planned;
- (iii) Non transparency of some leaders to their members;
- (iv) Inconsistent and false reporting; and
- (v) Direct loss of project funds and inputs like in Menze and Matu, respectively.

In order to solve these gaps once and for all, the following actions were taken:

- Management debriefed all BOs (and provide them with a copy of the budget) at the start of every quarter before funds were disbursed onto their accounts so as to fight underutilization, over withdrawals and diversion of funds.
- BOs that were involved in any financial indiscipline were made to refund the losses they caused their groups. More than UGX 10 million was recovered.
- In some cases, corrupt leaders were voted out and new ones elected.

- All Field Officers were trained on BO books keeping. On every visit, they were required to verify the prudence in postings and balances of the BOs.
- Finance department conducted regular impromptus pot checks both to mentor and audit compliance with the financial management guidelines.
- One BO, Rhinocamp parish was expelled from the programme due to fraud.

This experience showed that BOs used to small funds lack the ability to effectively manage huge project funds. While this gap also justifies the "dis empowering" practices many support agencies for doing everything for their partners, it also shows that capacity gaps are solvable not by skills training and mentoring alone, opportunistic practices necessitate stern actions like expulsion from leadership or support altogether. Doing so helps BO members to gain ownership of their project funds by ensuring a transparent and accountable management by their leaders, thereby creating sustainable trust.







DEEPENING ACCOUNTABILITY

AFARD acknowledges the fact that corporate governance requires in part organizational responsiveness and accountability. As such, while donors continue to support our work, AFARD should provide relevant services and prudently account for those services. Such an outlook of development management, therefore, requires co-management in that the various stakeholders – donors, government, the Board and Management of AFARD, District NGO Forum and other networks affiliated to and beneficiaries - effectively participate in the planning, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of AFARD's programmes. This co-management approach ensures that the link between what we set to do (outputs), what we invest (inputs), and what we envisage to achieve (outcomes and impacts) bring together the vitality of every actor.

In 2009, AFARD depeened this accountability frontier by ensuring that:

- The annual plan was conducted in a bottom-up approach through joint planning and budget review meetings. The approved plan was also shared with all district and lower local governments for integration into their 3-year rolling development plans.
- Funds are disbursed to the point of use thereby allowing every beneficiary organization to use and account for its project funds. Further, the beneficiary organizations held monthly minuted meetings in order to provide feedback to members. Working committees also conducted periodic field and home visits to ensure compliance with what were agreed upon.
- Field Officers were encouraged to implement field activities in close collaboration with local governments. With BOs assigned to every one of them, activity reporting, and field and home visits of members of BOs were part of the routine work. These were complemented by periodic top management spot visits.
- Quarterly, BO based reviews were conducted so that performance is assessed with members and management issues ironed out collectively. At a higher level, similar reviews were also conducted at district network levels. Reports of this reviews were circulated to all BOs, local governments, Board members, and donors.
- Bi-annually, on-spot visits by AFARD Board and local government technical and political officials as well as by the donors were also conducted in order for them to interface with BO members.
- Periodically, AFARD also participated in sector working meetings at district and national levels.
- Annually, a financial audit of AFARD by a reputable audit firm (currently KPMG) appointed by the Board is also provided for.
- AFARD encourage local governments to take keen interest in the affairs of BOs in their jurisdictions.
 Paidha LC III Chairman on this note recovered UGX 2.3 million that was embezzled in Oruku. In Yumbe, the Chairman LCIII of Drajini investigated frauds in Lodonga and Matu.

In this way, AFARD was able to respond to the various needs of its beneficiaries (space for diverse voices), make key stakeholders aware of what we are doing and the results (information flow), and share experiences with others (cross-learning). Importantly, this approach won AFARD credibility, support and acceptance in all local governments





MANAGEMENT REPORT — PERSPECTIVE ON ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Organizational growth

In order to strengthen the capacity of Civil Society Organizations in Uganda, the National NGO Forum and DENIVA developed the National NGO Quality Assurance Mechanisms (QuAM) in 2006. The QuAM provides the Code of Honour for NGO certification. Using the QuAM indicators, annually AFARD assesses itself internally in order to (i) gauge its compliance status with the generally accepted principles of NGOs in Uganda; and (ii) to identify core areas that need improvements.

In April 2009, the staffs jointly assessed AFARD on the key QuAM indicators of organizational governance, programmes, and performance improvement. The key finding was that from the 2008 results when there were deficits of 11 scores (43/54 – that is 80%), in 2009 the number of deficit scores declined to only 4 representing 93% achievement (50/54).

Notwithstanding, the critical gaps that required filling were related to the need to improve on progress documentation, developing and implementing staff development plan, and widening the Board-Beneficiary contacts to include also local government officials in monitoring of our activities. These issues were duly considered in the 2010 planning.

Human Resources and Development

Human resource development remains cardinal in AFARD's commitment to making enduring impacts and attaining institutional stability. This explains why staff performance assessment and improvement is an inevitable process of our resources management.

In the year, staffs received a number of opportunities with which to enhance their task-oriented skills, namely:

- The participation of the Programme Director in a World Bank co-funded South-South Peer-to-Peer Learning programme on Participatory Gender Budgeting that drew participants from Uganda, Tanzania, South Africa, Ghana, and Ecuador.
- AFARD hosted two students (G. Marjon and D. Katherine) from the Africa Studies Centre, Leiden and O.K. Charles from Uganda Martyrs University. These were Masters of Development Studies/Anthropologystudents who researched on one of the themes of AFARD's operation—entrepreneurship development. Their interactions with staffs provided invaluable research skills.
- The participation of the Food and Income Manager & Field Officer Health in monitoring workshops in Arua organized by Civil Society Fund.
- The participation of Field Officers (Crop production) in training in sustainable agriculture conducted by PELUM- Uganda chapter.
- Staff in-house coaching, by the Programme Director, in report writing skills.
- Supporting one Accountant to continue with his B.Com studies in Makerere University, Kampala.
- Supporting two Crop Production Specialists to undertake their ABA-Agric. studies in Uganda Martyrs University, Nkozi .

- Co-learning forum with intern students from Uganda Christian University, Mukono and Nile University, Arua.
- Continuing to pursue the weekly staff meetings that review Field Officers' implementation, skill gaps and solutions thereto.
- Continuous engagement of the field staffs in baseline studies and joint field monitoring exercises.

In all, the commitment to enhance staff professional capacity takes a more balanced way of ensuring that both the staffs and AFARD benefit from the investment.

Networking and Leverages

In the year, AFARD continued to renew its commitment to networking for development. The various networks that AFARD subscribes to are aligned with its various thematic domains and have been critical points for cross-learning. These networks includes:

- Uganda National NGO Forum
- Uganda National AIDS Service Organizations
- Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network
- PELUM Uganda Chapter
- Nebbi/Yumbe/Moyo District NGO Forum
- Network of AIDS Service Organizations in Nebbi
- Uganda Water Integrity Network (UWIN)

Publications

The following publications (also available on our website: www.afard.net) were produced in the year:

- Alfred Lakwo (2009) *Making Decentralization Work for Women in Uganda*. African Studies Centre, Leiden. African Studies Collection Vol.16.
- AFARD (March 2009) Making HIV/AIDS Prevention and Mitigation Education Relevant: Customized Information, Education, and Communication Messages for Different Social Categories. AFARD.
- AFARD (April 2009). The NGO Quality Assurance Certification Mecahnism (QuAM). AFARD Internal Assessment Report.
- Dr. Alfred Lakwo & Wilfred Cwinyaai (April 2009). WENDI Operation Guidelines 2009-15. AFARD.
- AFARD (April 2009). Fisher Community Anti-AIDS Project (FiCAP). Internal Annual Review Report. AFARD.
- Sr. Rose Orach, Chonga J.B. Franklyn & Dr. Alfred Lakwo (May 2009). "Our Health Your Responsibility".

 Community Management of Preventive Health: Community Health Frontline Advisors Toolkit.

 AFARD.
- Dr. Alfred Lakwo and Wilfred Cwinyaai (May 2009). Women's Civil Engagement in Nebbi and Yumbe Districts- Baseline Study Report. AFARD.
- Dr. Alfred Lakwo and Wilfred Cwinyaai (July 2009). *Jangokoro Food Security Project. Rapid Baseline Study Report*. AFARD.
- Dr. Alfred Lakwo & Wilfred Cwinyaai (July 2009). WENDI Baseline Study Report. AFARD.
- Dr. Alfred Lakwo and Wilfred Cwinyaai (August 2009). Murusi Safe water and Sanitation Project Baseline Study Report. AFARD.

FINANCIAL REPORT, 2009

Statement of Incomes and Expenditures

In 2009, AFARD's planned budget increased from UGX 1.5 billion in 2008 to UGX 5.5 billion. As at December 31, the financial statement of Incomes and Expenditure is below.

The main source of funds was from grants and donations. In this regard, we are grateful for the financial support from Gorta, the Delegation of European Commission in Uganda, Civil Society Fund, Manos Unidas (JACA city), and the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Kampala.

In terms of expenditure, AFARD adheres to ensuring that the larger proportion of its budget goes into meeting project costs as is exemplified by the marginal 7% management costs.

AFARD'S INCOME AND EXPENDITURE STATEMENT FOR THE MONTH ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2009						
Income by source:	Total	%				
Grants & Donations	5,241,922,444	94.3				
Members contributions	287,884,497	5.2				
Other incomes	28,850,000	0.5				
	5,558,656,941	100				
Expenditures						
Administrative cost	182,951,062	3.3				
Personnel cost	180,659,701	3.3				
Capital cost	1,332,696,213	24.0				
Project cost	1,487,796,020	26.8				
Beneficiary Organisations	1,764,434,309	31.7				
Balance carried forward	610,119,636	11.0				
Total	5,558,656,941	100				

REPORT OF THE AUDITORS TO THE MEMBERS OF AFARD ON THE FUND ACCOUNTABILITY STATEMENT FOR THE 12 MONTHS TO 31 DECEMBER 2008

Introduction

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of AFARD, which comprise the income and expenditure statement for the year, ended 31 December 2008, the fund accountability statement and a summary of significant accounting notes and other explanatory notes.

Respective responsibilities

Management is responsible for the preparation of those financial statements which present fairly in all material respects, the state of affairs of the AFARD that the receipts and payments are in accordance with obligations of AFARD as per the Memoranda of Understanding with the donors and Generally Accepted Accounting Principles. This responsibility includes: designing, implementing and maintaining internal controls relevant to the preparation and fair presentation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error; selecting and applying appropriate accounting policies; and making accounting estimates that are reasonable in the circumstances.

Basis of opinion

We conducted the audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. Those standards require that we plan and perform our audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement. An audit includes an examination, on a test basis, of evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessment of the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as an evaluation of the overall fund accountability statement presentation. The fund accountability statement is not intended to be in conformity with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS).

Opinion

In our opinion the fund accountability statement, which has been prepared on the basis of the accounting policies, present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of AFARD at 31 December 2008 and its receipts and expenditure for the year then ended.

KPMG

Certified Public Accountants P O Box 3509 Kampala, Uganda

A BRIEF OUTLOOK INTO 2010

In the upcoming year, AFARD envisaged an upscale of its operations from 56 communities to 82 communities; from 19 to 22 lower local governments, and from 3 to 4 districts in the West Nile region This will cover more than 10,828 households with 100,500 people (52% females). Using an integrated and area-based development approach that anchors on empowerment, the planned activities in the various thematic foci have witnessed an increase in the budget from UGX 5.6 billion to UX 7.1 billion as is summarized below.

Budget line	Budget estimates	% share
Personnel	289,707,754	4
Food security	2,418,413,000	34
Income security	270,400,000	4
Water and sanitation	968,248,167	14
HIV/AIDS	111,060,800	2
Education	464,390,000	7
Good governance	325,606,800	5
Networking	1,090,437,016	15
Capital investment	1,182,137,211	17
Grand total	7,120,400,748	100





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