



Agency for Accelerated Regional Development
(AFARD)

Annual Report 2011

Unlocking Aspiration Failure Traps



Annual Report, 2011

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Introduction

The Agency for Accelerated Regional Development (AFARD)

AFARD is a local, not-for-profit, non-denominational, non-governmental organization (Reg. No. S.5914/3753 and Reg. No. 45170). It was formed in July 2000 by professional sons and daughters of West Nile.

The Vision:

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

Our Mission:

To contribute to the molding of a region in which the local people (men and women), including those who are marginalized, are able to participate effectively and sustainably and take a lead in the development of the region.

The Operational Values/Principles

- Respecting human dignity, equality, justice, and freedom;
- The enshrinement of the empowerment approach to development ;
- Local ownership by beneficiaries of whatever initiatives they are involved in;
- Use of participatory methodologies;
- Reliance on local resources including indigenous technology and knowledge, 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.

Our Work Philosophy:

- People know their problems better;
- It takes hard work to live a better life;
- Donors are friends en route to beneficiaries' desired goals;
- Poor people lead holistic livelihoods and support to them should be cognizant of this fact;
- Change is gradual, involving time, hard lessons, openness, and flexibility; and
- Capacity building can neither be rushed nor pre-determined.

Our core strategies:

- Technical and managerial skills training;
- Participatory action research;
- Information gathering and dissemination;
- Resource mobilization;
- Networking; and
- Advocacy.

From the Chair, Board of Directors

This year 2011 marks the 11th Year of AFARD's dedicated and accountable operations in West Nile region. It is the age of a child, who given the ideal condition is in primary five and is able to read and write with understanding both in English and the local language – a child able to comprehend literacy and numeracy. This is AFARD's analogy in its quest for a niche in development programmes.

Over the years, AFARD has been able to:

- (i) Bring change in the lives of the people of the region due to its commitment. These are people who historically were laborers in central Uganda. They live as refugees from the 1979 civil war and suffered a great deal from the internal rebellion against the National Resistance Movement until 2003 and the Lord's Resistance Army;
- (ii) Build fruitful relationships with the donor community that continued to attract sizeable grants for community based projects; and
- (iii) Learn lessons of what works and what does not in order to cautiously replicate strategies and approaches that are West Nile region-sensitive.



With a focused Board of Directors composed of persons of high repute and a professionally competent technical team, the pathways of AFARD's actions are visible. From a 3-person volunteers working in a rented one-roomed office and reaching out to only 3 community groups in 2000, now AFARD stands tall. She has 28 staffs, its own offices in Nebbi and Yumbe built on its own land, adequate logistics, and it reaches out to about half a million people in 25 lower local governments in 5 of the 8 districts in West Nile region. Further, their work impact is visible; something that makes AFARD a household name. These results are best summed by His Grace, Henry Luke Orombi after the Board Field Visit in December 2011 that, "AFARD's work brought smiles on faces that were in despair, built hopes where there was none, and is inspiring a bright future for the old and young, women and men, boys and girls, and the socio-politically marginalized communities". This assertion emanates from the visibly proud communities where: food is adequately available, safe water is accessible, children are in schools, income generation and asset accumulation are daily struggles, and the realization that government (and other development institutions) are for the people. These changes befit the theme of this year's report – unlocking aspiration failure traps!

As a new Board Chair, I am grateful for such a level of commitment from sons and daughters of the region who hitherto sought greener pastures elsewhere with the hope that "development will be brought by others." Equally, I am also appreciative of the change in mindset among the rural communities away from expecting that "government will bring for us development" into "we have to own the fight of poverty and government can only provide us a conducive environment."

To all the Board members, old and new alike, my gratitude for your dedicated stewardship that saw AFARD grow to this stage. To the leadership of the different local governments we thank you for your collaboration and support over the years. And finally, to the different donors, especially Gorta, Civil Society Fund and the Delegation of the European Commission in Uganda, I give a special thank you for all the worthwhile long term investments you have made in the region through AFARD. The empowering returns of your support are indisputable.

As we look forward to a bright future: deepening our sustainable impacts and upscaling our outreach, we call upon all people of good will and institutions committed to result-driven development to partner with us in transforming the rural poor communities in West Nile into a prosperous, healthy and informed society where people live sustainable livelihoods in love of God and mankind.

Rt. Rev. Dr. Ocan Sabino Odoki
Chair, Board of Directors

From the Executive Director



The theme of this 11th Year of AFARD's work "Unlocking Aspiration Failure Traps" draw from the proven facts that the poor are trapped not just in poverty but worse so in inability to aspire for a better life given their experiences of persistent failures to achieve such aspirations – "the aspiration failure trap." This latter trap is rooted in the human capability deprivations that the poor have. Remember, they are far from the urban-elite development, lack assets, political connections, role models, and information. Further, the poor: live on less than \$1.25 per day; have large families; earn barely enough to cover their basic needs; spend more on food, alcohol and tobacco, and festivals; have multiple occupations without specialization; and depend on informal finance and insurance system. These disadvantages accumulate into poor health and low literacy together with insecure livelihoods characterized by inability to secure one's life now, buffer shocks in the future, and claim citizenship rights to public goods and services.

The aspiration failure trap is rife in West Nile. A 2009 baseline study conducted by AFARD in 5,833 households found out that besides having 7 persons per household as compared to only 5 nationally, life in these households were deplorable. Only 1% resided in permanent housing units and exceptionally few had assets: bicycles (8%), radios (10%), and mobile phones (7%). Another 27% and 85% did not have a goat and cow respectively. Many (92%) primarily depended on subsistence farming as their main source of livelihood. Only 42% ate balanced diet. Average income per season was about UGX 100,000. Only 33% had access to safe drinking water, 49% used mosquito nets, and 76% used shared latrines. Overall, 37% of the people were always sick, 85% being from unsafe water and sanitation related sicknesses with 8 productive days lost by adults and an average of UGX 16,470 spent on medical bills. Adult literacy level was also very low (20%) just as only 3% had any form of vocational skills. Finally, less than 40% participated in any local government budget cycles and benefited from any government project.

These facts of life are unacceptable in the 21st Century and in Uganda that is a known emerging economy in the Great Lakes region. Aware that many such poor people have individually failed to achieve their aspirations, AFARD has opted for a collective success approach inherent in community groups. These groups enable pooling of experiences, risks and resources and provide coordinated investment cost-return equilibrium.

Building on the gains made in 2010, this year AFARD focused on: (i) improving operations through governance and management effectiveness; deepening accountability; and piloting AFARD's sustainability building; and (ii) deepening programme impacts through stabilizing sustainable food security; strengthening group credit schemes; piloting production for the market; enhancing the capacity of Community Health Frontline Advisors; advocacy for girl child education; evoking participation by grassroots communities in local government budget cycle; and strengthening the capacity of community groups.

With the support of our various stakeholders: donors, local government, and beneficiary organizations, we were able to catalyze the unlocking of aspiration failures. The dreams of many were achieved. For instance, within the West Nile Development Initiative Programme, 87% of the households are able to eat 3 meals a day; 27% have at least UGX 1 million savings in cash; 78% use safe water for drinking; 96% use own pit latrines; 89% of members know their HIV status; malaria incidence rate declined to 11%; gross school enrolment surged to 115%, and 77% of the people are participating in local governance.

This report, therefore, tells the story of citizenship building through collective rights and responsibilities towards the dignified life people aspire to live. It shows that with results-driven support, effective local organization, strategic capacity building, and a transparent operation, West Nile can indeed catch up with the rest of Uganda. Lamentation of exclusion will not bring bread on the table. Neither will it take our children to school. It is decisive, strategic, and pro-active actions that will bring all these gains to our communities however excluded they were. Nice reading!

Alfred Lakwo, Ph.D.
Executive Director

Inauguration of New Board Members



By the end of 2010, three positions on the board had fallen vacant following the untimely death of Rev. Fr. Geoffrey Ocamgiu (RIP) and the resignation of Ms Grace Freedom Kwiyoewiny to join elective politics and Ms Marion Kyomuhendo to join UN system in West Africa. Three prominent people kindly accepted to serve in the three vacant positions.

During the year, the new Board members were officially sworn in. These were Rt. Rev. Sabino Ocan Odoki, the Bishop of Arua Catholic Diocese, Lady Justice Anglin Flavia Senoga, a Judge of the High Court of Uganda, and Ms Gloria Royce Androa, an Agricultural Extension and Nutrition specialist. These new members added onto the remaining two members: His Grace, Henry Luke Orombi, the Archbishop of the Church of Uganda, and Mr Vasco Kura, an Educationist and Human Resource specialist.

The Board members also conducted an election that ushered in Rt. Rev. Sabino Ocan Odoki as the new Board Chair and Mr Vasco Kura retained his Vice Chair position. Board Committees were accordingly appointed by the members: Finance, Administration and Resource Mobilization (FARM) Committee now has Mr Vasco Kura and Mrs Flavia Anglin Senoga as members, and the Programmes Committee has Ms Gloria Royce Androa and His Grace, Henry Luke Orombi as members.

An Overview of 2011

Introduction

AFARD envisions active citizens' households and organizations able to equitably and sustainably enjoy: (i) Food Security- Eat nutritious foods as a family, and at least three times a day; (ii) Income/Economic Security- Live in decent homes and accumulate adequate financial and material assets; (iii) Health Security- Suffer less from preventable diseases and deaths; (iv) Education security- Attain literacy and employable skills; and (v) Good governance - Exhibit voice and choice in the governance of one's communities. At a broader level, we envision an AFARD that is visible, impacting on poverty reduction, and less donor-dependent.

Operational Focus

In accordance with the Board of Directors' Regulations, this Annual Report presents the annual programme and organizational performance from January 1 to December 31, 2011 in line with the following approved foci **at AFARD Level:** In governance, to institute the new members of the Board of Directors; and in management, to improve staff level, remuneration, operational skills, as well as AFARD's participation in national networks. Attention was also focused on deepening accountability and a pilot of AFARD's sustainability building in oilseed subsector production and marketing.

At Program level: In food security to ensure a stable and sustainable food security that is gender and nutrition sensitive; In the income/economic security to strengthen group credit schemes and production for the market; In health security to enhance Community Health Frontline Advisors' capacity for community education and policing; In education security to improve girl child education; In good governance to strengthen participation by grassroots communities in local government budget cycle; and in institutional development to improve partner groups' leadership and governance, planning, monitoring, reporting and accountability.

Programme Outreach

Table1: Number of people reached out to by projects and districts, 2011

Projects/Programmes	Males	Females	Total	Women and % of total	Channels	Districts covered				
						Nebbi		Arua		Moyo
Engendering Decentralized Poverty Resources Management Project (EDPRMP)	0	189,563	189,563	100%	6 lower local governments	X	X		X	
West Nile Development Initiative (WENDI) Programme	35,612	37,573	73,185	51%	81 groups	X	X	X	X	X
Increasing West Nile Smallholder Farmers' Agricultural Productivity	35,612	37,573	73,185	51%	81 groups	X	X	X	X	X
Fisher Community Anti-AIDS Project (FiCAP)	28,381	30,734	59,115	52%	8 Fishing Villages	X				
Payera Community Development Project	2,768	2,999	5,767	52%	2 lower local governments	X				
Jangokoro Food Security Project	705	718	1,423	50%	5 groups		X			
Mainstreaming Rights to Food in sub-national plans	829	535	1,364	39%	178 parishes	X	X		X	
TOTAL	103,907	299,695	403,602	74%						

Key Interventions in 2011

The main projects and programmes in the year were:

- West Nile Development Initiative (WENDI) Programme funded by Gorta (Grant #UGA/2018/11) with the goal of empowering rural marginalized communities in West Nile to transform their energies for the attainment of secure and self-sustaining livelihoods.
- Increasing West Nile Smallholder Farmers' Agricultural Productivity funded by Irish Aid (Grant # UGA/1986/10) with the goal to increase food security in the beneficiary households.
- Engendering Decentralized Poverty Resources Management Project funded by Delegation of the European Commission in Uganda (Grant # DCI-NSAPVD/2008/169-745) with the goal that Lower Local Governments (LLGs) in the selected West Nile districts of Nebbi and Yumbe provide gender sensitive and equitable services to the community.
- Fisher Community Anti-AIDS Project (FiCAP) funded by Civil Society Fund (Uganda AIDS Commission) (Grant #RFA08-001) with the aim to contribute to the reduction of sexual transmission of HIV among fishing communities in Panyimur and Pakwach Sub-Counties, Jonam County, Nebbi District.
- Payera Community Development Project funded by African Evangelistic Enterprise – Uganda with the aim of improving the socio – economic livelihood of the beneficiary households in Erussi sub – county, Nebbi District within a period of 5 years.
- Jangokoro Food Security Project funded by Manos Unidas (Grant # UGA58871 and UGA 64941) with the goal of food security in the households of benefiting village associations' members.
- Mainstreaming rights to food in Sub-national plans and strategies funded by FAO (grant # GCP/INT/087/GER) with the aim to contribute to building capacity of district, sub-county and parish authorities to formulate, manage and monitor respective development plans with priorities that strongly feature food security and nutrition.
- Technical support Capacity Building for Production for the Market and Assets funded by SNV aiming at developing gender sensitive and business oriented market linkages between farmers and buyers and improving access to appropriate financial services to support farmers economic organizations and businesses.

Scope of Change in the Aspirations of Beneficiaries, 2011

The findings from the Monitoring, Reporting, Accountability and Learning (MRAL) Tool exercise that was conducted in December 2011 among all the beneficiary households under West Nile Development Initiative and Increasing West Nile Smallholder Farmers' Agricultural Productivity is summarized in figures 1 and 2 below. Evident therein are positive gains attributable to our interventions given that no other others exist in the areas. For instance, while 4-years ago only 5 in 10 of participating households were able to eat 3 meals a day today 8 in 10 households ably access adequate foods. Equally, there is increase in cash savings, use of own pit latrines, knowledge of HIV status, enrolment of children in schools, and participation in local governance. The adoption of pilot production for the market also increasedhouseholds' acquisition of material assets staring with low cost assets like radios, phones, and beds with mattresses.

Figure 1: Results of WENDI programme in the Beneficiary Households

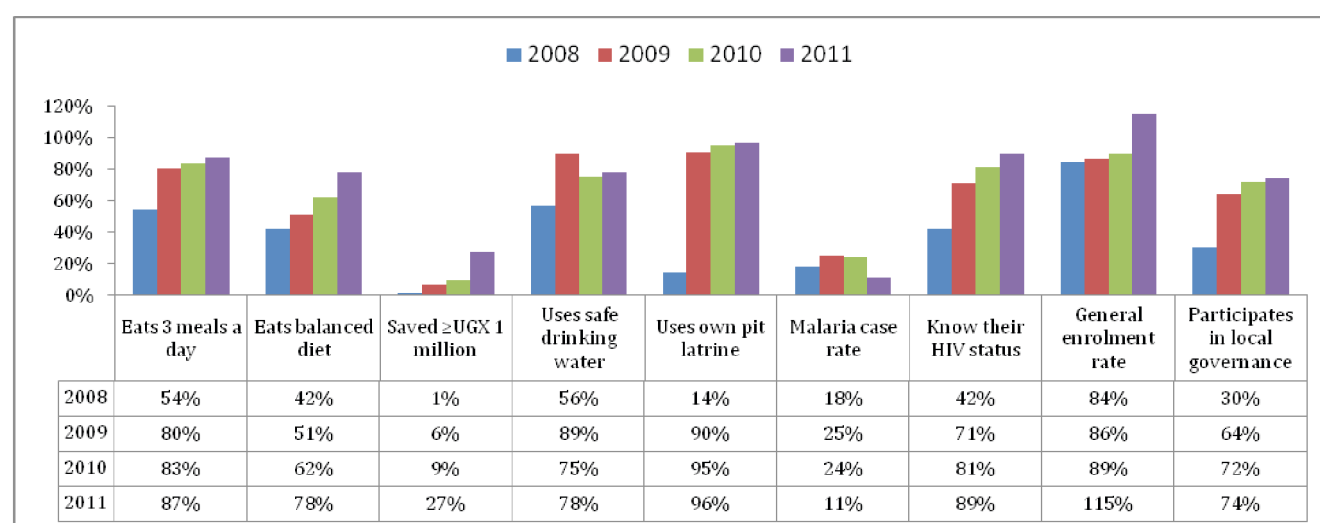
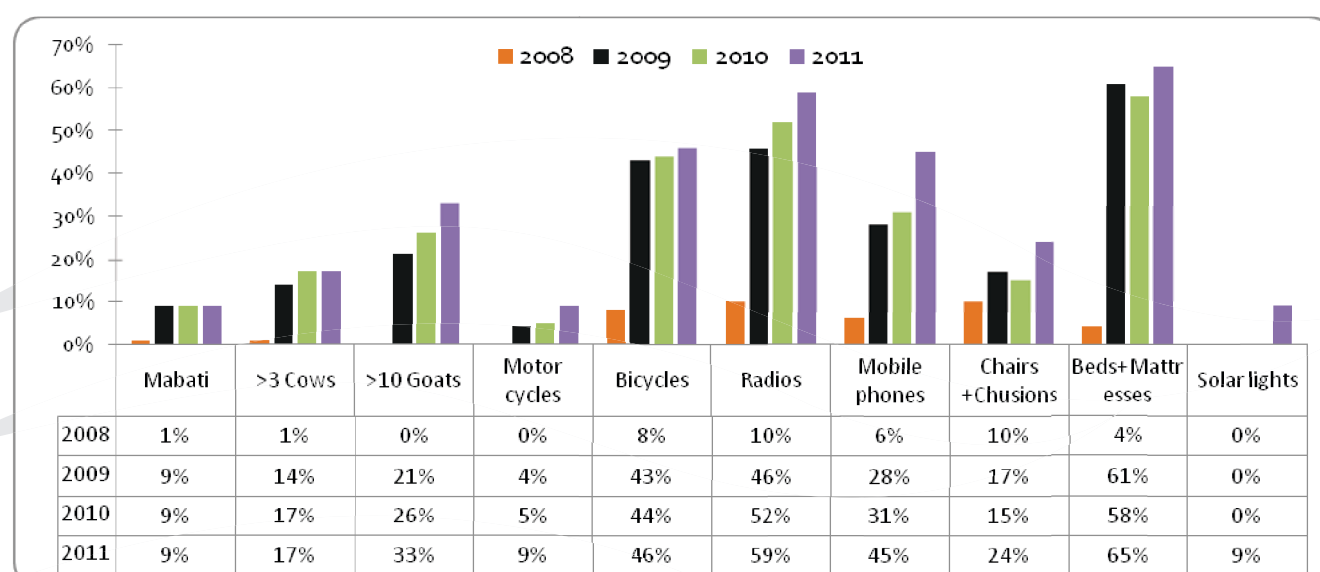


Figure 2: Assets Building Status



Ensuring Stable and Sustainable Food Security

Funded by Gorta, Irish Aid, and Manos Unidas

The Needs

Many households in the project area are food insecure. Neither do they have adequate number of meals (at least 3 meals a day) nor do they have better food sharing practices. Different social categories do not also receive diets commensurate with their healthy and productive living needs.

Our Responses

To trigger change among new and old households, 300 hand hoes, 312 Boer goats, 76 Mubende goats, 1,536 local nannies, and 1,700 bags of cassava cutting were distributed. Improved agronomic and livestock management trainings were conducted as and when the farmers would use them. Old households that received seeds and planting materials were coached to use own seeds to grow the staple food crops and to avoid sales of food. Besides, nutrition educations that attracted couples were conducted to ensure that family heads knew the importance of different food needs by different social categories: pregnant mothers, infants, persons living with HIV/AIDS, etc.

The Results:

- (a) Household acreage increased on average from 1 to 4 acres. Additional 11,000 acres of cassava (the regional staple food) was planted. Better farming practices – agronomic, livestock husbandry, and environment conservation – are being adopted.
- (b) From improved livestock management, death rates in goats declined from 19% in 2010 to 17% and the number of goats increased per household from a dismal 1 unit in 2008 to 5 units in 2011. In the year, 3,815 goats were sold worth UGX 217.8 million and 3,425 goats were used on social issues savings households worth UGX 242.6 million. Thus from goats alone, on average a beneficiary household earned about UGX 111,549 (the total household income in 2008).
- (c) In many homes, food is available all year round and thus they are able to eat not only at least 3 meals daily (87%) but also balanced diet (78%) using mainly locally available foods. During the annual review meetings, many households reported a stable food security status and did echo the ability to maintain the status quo next year as they have secured seeds and planting materials besides having fields planted with cassava.



Candia Hassan Mubaraka, Chairman, Katanga Group pulling out Loyira (Photo: F. Chonga)

Case Study 1: Adequate food, improved family harmony

Often food security is only associated with reduction in malnutrition as people eat adequate but also nutritious foods for a healthy living. Such a focus explains why food and nutrition security critically explores whether food is available, adequate, accessible, stable and socially acceptable. Yet, this is just one side of the story as Mrs. Onjikos (not real name) a member of Ndara group in Rhino Camp sub county, Arua district narrated.

Mrs. Onjikos is married and has 7 children; two of who are already themselves married and have their independent kitchens. "Before Gorta [meaning WENDI programme] came to our village", she notes, "the greatest problem that I faced in my household was lack of adequate food. We had to hunt for food like men hunted wild game. As women, we would go to the river to harvest water weeds [that has millet-like seeds]. However much water weeds one harvested it was inadequate for just one meal, even for only two people. This inadequate food caused a lot of bickering and frequent late night fights between me and my husband. When he would return home, forgetting that he left us with nothing to eat, MrKassim (not real name) would ask for food. The little that I would serve him would meet with grumbling and fights that I did not care for him. Besides, sitting to watch my children eating less food that would force them to "beg for food from children in families that could buy food from the market" was a great source of pain for me. Often, I would attack Mr. Kassim for being a "lesser man who was unable to fend for his family as other men did". Such nasty remarks would spark bad fights that one night he dislocated my arm.

Such fights over inadequate food are now over. With the arrival of Gorta, we planted an acre of cassava which from month six was already edible. We continued to increase our acreage yearly and now we have 3 acres of land under cassava alone. With these, we have enough food for all of us. My children eat enough and everyday leave a balance of what they cannot finish. Mr. Kassim has for the last 3 years neither complained that "you have served me inadequate food" nor "raised his hands to touch me on any matter of food." I also feel proud that for once in my life I have a family that no longer risks the crocodiles in river Nile in search for water weeds. My children also have enough to share with other children instead of begging like before.

In all, with adequate food, I now have peace of mind and pride in my family. Thanks to Gorta and AFARD for the salvation they brought to our village. Now, many women are preoccupied with the struggle for bigger things than ekking for food.



A field of soya bean 2 in bloom

Case study 2: Advocacy for Food and Nutrition Security

Northern Uganda has a high rate of food and nutrition insecurity. According to the Analysis of Nutrition Situation in Uganda 2010 and Uganda Nutrition Action Plan 2011-15, northern Uganda exhibits 40%, 21% and 7% stunting, underweight, and wasting respectively as compared to 39%, 16%, and 6% nationally. Unfortunately, while the underlying causes may be known and understood, they are not well addressed in sub-national plans. Until a year ago, the guidelines from the Ministry of Local Government used by the local governments did not require the local governments to mandatorily include food security as a cross-cutting issue in the plans. As a result, the plans may reflect some food security and nutrition issues under various sectors such as Production and Health but a harmonized approach across sectors is absent. Yet considerable resources are being, and are likely to be, channeled to local governments. This gap prompted the need to ensure that on the principles of human rights and good governance Food and Nutrition Security (FNS) are mainstreamed in local plans. AFARD therefore partnered with FAO in building capacity of 30 sub-county and 174 parish authorities in Nebbi, Zombo and Yumbe districts to formulate, manage and monitor respective development plans with priorities that strongly feature food security and nutrition.

To achieve the above objectives the following key activities were implemented: (i) the following documents were reviewed and factored into the “Basic FNS Facilitation Checklist,” documentation guide, and posters on the Local Government Planning Cycle and FNS Situation Analysis: FAO’s Right to Food Methodological Toolbox, the Constitution 1995, Harmonized Participatory Planning Guidelines for Lower Local Governments, the (draft) National Food Security and Nutrition Bill, Local Government Act (Amended) 1997, the Food and Nutrition Policy, and Gender Policy; and (ii) These tools were used for the induction of Facilitators who were drawn from AFARD staff and local government staffs and the sensitization workshops for 1,320 district and parish level leaders who included technical staffs, elected officials, and leaders of women, youth, persons with disabilities, and persons living with HIV and AIDS.

The interactions with local leaders revealed that only 30% of the annual budgets were allocated for FSN issues with a bias on NAADS programme. This fund unfortunately did not targeted the most vulnerable population but instead addressed concerns of the “well off” – those with wealth and connections. It also found out that many leaders had abdicated government from FNS issues tying it to individual households per se. In the end, many local governments made commitments that they would pursue during their planning meetings for 2011/12. Zeu Sub County is one of the LLGS that met its pledge. A review of their approved plan indicated that the leaders:

- Conducted a FNS situation analysis with clear vulnerable groups and critical entry points;
- Targeted their expenditures in the 2011/12 plan and budget to the needs of the vulnerable groups;
- Adopted a multisectoral approach to address FNS beyond Production sector to include health, community based services, and public works. For instance, they proposed to increase FNS by supplying improved seeds, constructing markets, culverts and bridges, installing safe water points and enforcing safe sanitation and hygiene.
- In line with the above, diversified the funding sources for FNS beyond NAADS to include local revenue, road fund, LGMSDP, and PMA/AEGG.

This initiative has brought forward the dire need for FNS. Donors, government and CSO are working together for this common good. It has also highlighted the importance of advocacy in securing human rights to public services for the marginalized groups. Further, it has shown that technical capacity matters. Local governments have for long underrated FNS issues in their plans not because of lack of funds but rather due to lack of strategic skills and policy awareness.

The big tasks ahead remain with effective engagement of the broader grassroots communities and not just leaders to demand for their rights to and accountability for food and nutrition security. Besides, they need to monitor approved plans and budgets to ensure that funds are disbursed for them. However, this will also ensure that the capacity of local government officials is further strengthened so that they are able to conduct FSN responsive planning, implementation, and reporting and effectively integrate nutrition aspects. Above all, there is need to increase the resource envelop of local governments for a FSN plan to be achieved.

Improving Economic Security through Production for the Market and Assets

Funded by Gorta, Irish Aid, Manos Unidas, and SNV

The Need

Northern Uganda hosts many income-poor people (6 as compared to only 3 in 10 people in the national average). Few households (<5%) in West Nile have cash savings of UGX 1 million. This is in part because farming that is the main economic activity is not strategically undertaken as a business. Even so, commercial farming in the region is curtailed by numerous impediments such as limited access to improved varieties, poor market infrastructures in the forms of bad roads, expensive means of transport, lack of storage facilities, and lack of collective marketing system.

Our responses

In the year, a pilot scheme was initiated under the Production for the Market and Asset (P4MA). A total of 150MT of soya beans, 52MT of simsim and 67MT of groundnuts seeds were procured and distributed together with 88 weighing scales, 3 moisture meters, 752 tauplines, and 177 spray pumps and assorted fungicides and pesticides. Group members were trained in basic agronomic practices and bulk marketing. A start-up capital of UGX 200 million was set up, and a warehouse is under construction in Yumbe town to serve Yumbe and Moyo district.

The Results

With targeting of production for assets, acreage under crops for marketing also increased. Simsim was grown on 3 acres per household and soya beans on 2 acres. Access to big buyers like Olam (U) Ltd and Mt. Meru for simsim and soya beans respectively improved on group marketing options: in bulk and at fair price. For instance, while middlemen were offering UGX 1,700/Kg of simsim, under P4MA all producers received UGX 2,000-2,300/Kg. Many farmers have therefore realized that bulking reduces transaction costs and improves on farm gate price. Meanwhile, AFARD is acknowledged as a "fair price advocates for farmers" in West Nile.

Through such gains, as the case study below will show, many households have been enabled to diversify their livelihood activities, save in cash and secure materials assets (see figure 2).



Mr. Dema Ejidio (Photo: A. Andrew)

Case study 3: Bulk Marketing; More Family Income

In the last two years WENDI programme focused on food security. Beneficiary Organization members (BoMs) were provided with improved high-yielding and drought resistant seeds and planting materials. Agronomic trainings also accompanied the inputs. In Rhinocamp, all the members of the ten BOs favored among other crops, sesame.

Mr. EjidioDema, a 40 year old member of Bandili WENDI Program group was one such farmers who planted sesame. His group is located in Bandili Village, Bandili Parish, Rhino Camp Sub-County, Arua District. With the availability of seeds, Mr. Ejidio was able to plant 5 acres of sesame. He hired labor of his group members to add onto his family labor. Come harvest, Mr. Ejidio had 2,000Kgs. Of this quantity, he reserved 500Kgs for home consumption given that sesame is a key ingredient in the local food chain.

However, during harvest time, AFARD was coincidentally exploring how to build the production for the market component of WENDI; an approach to raising household incomes. Promoting bulk marketing was adopted as a feasible strategy. Contacts were made with buyers in the region and a favorable price – UGX 2,350 per kilogram as compared to the prevailing UGX 1,700 – 2,200 per kilo - was agreed upon with Olam (U) Ltd.

Although some members were hesitant to bulk their produce because they either wanted the traditional “cash and carry approach” or they were in doubt of being paid given their nasty experiences with cooperatives in the past, Mr. Ejidio willingly bulked his produce. He said, “I bulked because the price was good, it did not require me to transport my produce, and because I trust AFARD”. His produce together with those of the willing others were weighed, bagged, marked, and transported to the central store at Rhinocamp sub county headquarters from where Olam collected and all members were paid. In this way, Mr. Ejidio was able to raise UGX 3,420,000. He used UGX 1,500,000 to buy a motor cycle (on which he is seated above). This is what he had to say:

Before I joined our group, I was running a small business and practicing small scale farming. I used to produce, at most, 100Kgs of sesame; which I would sell and use for food. Although sales were an individual affair, the prices offered by local traders were too low as no big buyer would come to our village. When I had the opportunity to produce more sesame because WENDI programme promotes income security, I was able to plant many acres, care for the crops, and thus receive high yield. Equally, when the opportunity came to sell at higher prices locally without the inconveniences of going to Arua, I could not hesitate. That is how I raised a good sum of money part of which I used to buy a motor cycle. The balance I have used for adding my business stock.

With the motor cycle, I have no transport problems these days. I can travel anywhere, any time. I have no stress of waking up to travel at night to Arua Town to restock my shop. Besides, I am also able to transport more of my commodities to the various weekly markets with ease. This is contrary to the past when I used to ferry small quantities of my commodities for sale using a bicycle to the nearby weekly markets like Rhino Camp, Okubani, and Miatangacia. “My business is progressing on well” he ended.

Strengthening Group Loan Schemes

Funded by Gorta, Manos Unidas, and AEE

The Need

FINSOPE Study report for 2010 shows that 47% of the population 18 years and above in northern Uganda as compared to only 30% nationally are financially excluded. Many are unable to access the financial services that are concentrated in urban centers. In response, AFARD initiated Group Loan Schemes (GLS). However, these schemes continued to suffer from inadequate portfolio that only support small loan sizes (averaging UGX 150,000) and to only 78% of group members. The scheme also charged exorbitant interest rate (60% per year – APR 79.2%) within a limited loan cycle that did not favour medium and long-term investments.

Our responses

To strengthen the GLSs, the operational guideline was refined. Interest rates were reduced to 40% per year, loan period increased from one to three months, and loan security waived off for women up to UGX 100,000. New record keeping systems were introduced and Loan Committee members were compelled to recover all outstanding loans. Loan giving was restricted to compliant members and loan records and practices were monitored more closely by Field Officers.

The results

As a result of these actions, portfolio size increased to UGX 1.2 billion, loan access increased to 91% of group members up from 78% in 2010. Repayment once again increased to 97% from 95% as group members became stringent on conditions of borrowing. Seven per cent of group members were bad debtors (those to be denied loan borrowing altogether).

The most appreciated aspects of the loan schemes are: (a) improved ability to buy needed foods from the market; (b) ability to pay for fees and meet other education related expenses; (c) women's ability to meet the basic needs without depending on their husbands as was in the past; and (d) the use of loan interest earnings to provide community care and support towards Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) education and Persons Living with AIDS access to ART services.

Table 2: Group Loan Scheme Status, 2011

Projects/Programme	Number of groups	Total members	Loan size	Number of borrowers		
				Males	Females	Total
West Nile Development Initiative	81	73,185	1,008,003,917	2,323	3,265	5,588
Fisher Comm. Anti-AIDS Project	8	1,012	155,582,700	384	575	959
Payera Community Development Project	50	827	5,052,100	0	827	827
Jangokoro Food Security	5	231	26,200,000	45	122	167
Engendering Decentralized Poverty Resources Management Project	6	190	13,030,000	-	140	140
Total	150	75,445	1,207,868,717	2,752	4,929	7,681



Ms. Candiru Florence (Photo: Juma B. Bale)

Case study 4: Group Loan Schemes; Engendering Microbusinesses

Among fishing communities, men are traditionally the approved owners of fishing inputs (boats, oars, and nets) and the proceeds therefrom. Ms. Candiru Florence, aged 25 years, a married mother to 4 children, and a member of Indilinga WENDI group in Aliba Sub County, Moyo district seems to go against this norm.

Ms. Candiru is in a polygamous marriage. Her family was very poor that most times they survived on barely a meal a day. With dwindling support from the husband, she was compelled to try all sorts of businesses. She traded in fish in Obongi market and would earn only UGX 80,000 from a fish bought for UGX 50,000 (costs that excluded her labour charges, processing fees, transport to the market, and local taxes). Yet, each day, she narrates, she saw herself sinking deeper in poverty. Having a proper diet in her home was a problem just like having good household utensils and proper clothing were assets unimaginable to acquire.

From the entrepreneurship skills training, Ms. Candiru realized that she had a huge potential in fishing business; opportunities that many women were shying away from in fear of gender norms. She took a loan worth UGX 500,000 and added her own savings of UGX 200,000 and procured a boat together with fishing nets. While her husband handles the fishing role, she controls the sales. During one trip to Arua market, Mrs. Candiru earns a profit not less than UGX 400,000 and within 2 months she had cleared all her loan obligations. "It is good money but challenging if your husband is not supportive of your initiative", she reiterates.

In this trade, Mrs. Candiru now owns what men controlled before – fishing boats and nets. Contrary to her violation of gender norms, acts that would have attracted ridicule, she points out that both men and women in her village respects her actions and achievements. "They come for business advice from me" she quips. Further, from the trade she has also been able to procure decent kitchen wares, clothing, a phone for her husband, a bicycle, chairs with cushions and beds with mattresses, additional fishing gears, and goats. She is also able to hire labour to farm her garden so that there is steady food stock without depending on market food access. She also noted that her family is now able to meet all education costs for her brother-in-law in a secondary school.

Finally, Mrs. Candiru noted that, "we are now saving money to buy a motorcycle to support us in transporting our fish to bigger markets. We plan to build a permanent house and expand our focus into other lucrative business initiatives." But most of all, despite being a second wife who had lost recognition and support from her husband, she prides that "from this sweat, my husband has now come back (and love is blossoming!) and we plan for the benefits of the two homes. This has helped build peace between us – the co-wives and our husband."



Mrs Zaida Ratib poses with her bicycle and below some of her assorted vet drugs(Photo byJuma Bale)

Case Study 5: Group Loan Scheme Unlocks Professional Entrepreneurship

Mrs. ZaidaRatib, is a 28year old married woman and a member of Lionga South Progressive WENDI program group that is located in Lionga parish, Gimara sub county, Obongi county, Moyo district.

Before WENDI program was introduced in my sub county, I was already trained as a VeterinaryScout (commonly called Vet Scout). This work was not productive. Few households had livestock especially goats. Even the few homes that had goats did not care for them because many people would ask "why treat a goat? Have goats become human beings?" With such attitude, I could not afford to waste money buying drugs to start my business; the core aim of the training – providing veterinary services to the community at a fee. Such a low demand made me abandon the effective use of the skills. I opted to selling live goats in Koboko market given that when my husband once bought for me the start-up drugs, I made a substantial loss from low sales, expired drugs, and high use of the little proceed to meet my basic kitchen roles and needs. Hardly could I save. I was purely dependent on my husband.

However, when AFARD registered Lionga South Progressive WENDI program as a BO, I did not hesitate to become a member. The provision of two local nannies per BoM household suddenly increased the number of livestock in the Sub County. But importantly, the trainings and emphasis on effective livestock management to reduce death rate and thereby provide opportunity for increased household income set in a good potential for my business. I took up this angle of "safe livestock management and turned it into a business venture that would use my existing skills, knowledge of the locality, and relationships that I had established in the community before". These attributes were the core of the basic income generation training.

With this a new business idea, I shifted my loan investment from selling goats in Koboko to Vet Scouting. After returning my first loan (UGX 165,000 that earned me a net profit of UGX 120,000 in three months), I took the second loan which I used for stocking all the drugs I wanted. I embarked vigorously on a BO by BO reach out selling my services. Indeed, I got a double blessing as the demand for my service suddenly increased. I was able to repay the loan also and take yet another loan. I now offer my services throughout Gimara Sub-County.

From this business, in 2011 alone, I have bought for myself a Sports Bicycle at UGX 270,000 and a mobile phone; both tools of my trade that I use to place appointments and honor them timely. I am considered a "timely service provider." I am also able to pay school fees and stock my kitchen.

Mrs. Ratib's future plans are to grow her business with a focus on being a sole service provider in Obongi County, buy her own plot of land and build a permanent house on it, buy a motor cycle and see all her children attain quality formal education. She appeals to fellow BO members that they should put knowledge given to them into strategic practices that can generate for them money instead of always thinking of short term material handouts from AFARD.

Sustainable Access to Safe Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

Funded by Gorta

The Needs

By the end of 2010, AFARD had provided more than 55 safe water points in water scarce areas where people used to depend on far-away unsafe water sources from rock creeks, dug-out holes in valleys and seasonal streams over which they competed with both domestic and wild animals. Yet, the sustainable benefits accruing from these facilities were in balance due to ineffective operation and maintenance and poor sanitation and hygiene. For instance, many user committees were relaxed in mobilizing user fee and many households preferred latrines (95%) with limited use of hand washing facilities (33%). Yet, WASH related disease burden (sicknesses, productive days lost and cash spent on treatment) was huge.

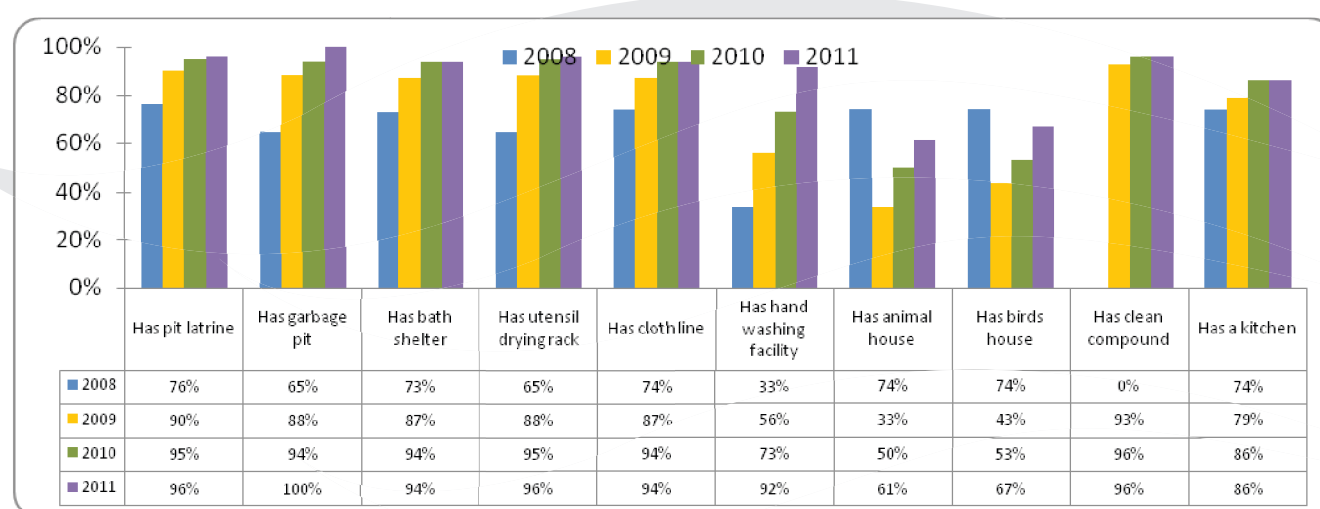
Our responses

In the year, six boreholes were drilled especially in Rhino Camp and Obongi where water scarcity was more severe. Facility Management Committees (FMCs) were encouraged to mobilize user fees monthly using "water point user register" and defaulters were denied access to water points. Meanwhile, 634 CHFAs were mentored on sanitation and hygiene education and home surveillance and they reached out to 6,616 people (43% males and 57% females) and visited 4,754 homes. Bank accounts for all water points and monthly accountability of all funds became mandatory. To date, they have saved a cumulative sum of UGX 11 million (averaging UGX 279,000 per water points).

The Results

All water sources are functional. Repairs and maintenance are done timely without the rhetoric of "let the source provider [like government] come and repair their water source." Likewise, as Figure 3 below shows many homes have the basic safe sanitation facilities. From all these initiatives, malarial case rate declined from a high 24%, 95%, and 40% to 11%, 20%, and 21% among adults, pregnant mothers, and children (0-5 years) respectively. Gastro-intestinal infections and respiratory tract infections also declined from a baseline (2008) figure of 9% and 5% to 6% and 3% in 2011 respectively. Average medical cost too declines over this period from UGX 60,745 to UGX 32,783. Further, our partner groups in Moyo district won awards during the sanitation week for best sanitation and hygiene communities (Abiriamajo) and households (Drabijo).

Figure 3: Safe Sanitation and Hygiene Practices, 2008-2011



Community Engagement for HIV and AIDS

Funded by Gorta, Irish Aid, and Civil Society Fund

The Needs

The 2006 national HIV Sero-behavioural Survey study reported that West Nile had the lowest HIV prevalence rate (2.3%). To the contrary, current district based studies indicates higher VCT sero-positivity rates of about 30%¹ where Most-at-Risk Population are like in Pakwach Town Council the gateway to the region, border towns like Koboko, Paidha, Goli, etc, and fishing villages on L. Albert and R. Nile. Such a status presents a huge challenge in preventing new infections and mitigation of the devastating effects of the pandemic. Yet, HIV/AIDS behaviour change communication and education (BCCE) has not reached majority of the population. Further, many people are not aware of their HIV status.

Our Responses

While under FiCAP HIV/AIDS prevention and mitigation was undertaken as a standalone project, in WENDI it was mainstreamed. In order to improve on the competency of local change agents, refresher training was conducted for 634 CHFAs. Twice, AFARD team co-facilitated HIV/AIDS education with them. Multi-communication channels were used to provide education – 36 seminars, 4 drama shows, 4 video shows, interpersonal sharing, 12 youth games and sports and 3,200 posters that reached out to 9,247 people. In addition, 92 mobile VCT services were also provided to 4,277 people and 9,000 condoms were distributed. Further, 3 PTCs were supported to improve on their group loans schemes. And 13 joint counseling meetings were held. Linkages to health facilities were encouraged and community care and support for PLWA promoted (for 172 PLWA and 507 OVCs).

The results

With increased awareness, sexual promiscuity is reported to be on the decline. Many people having witnessed cases of HIV positive people in their communities are now taking the disease seriously. Married couples are also starting to practice fidelity. Turn up for VCT remained exceptionally high. Men who initially thought they could know their HIV status through testing done by their wives are now craving for VCT. Meanwhile, Post Test Clubs have embarked on strengthening community care and support system. The fear and stigma about HIV/AIDS is also reducing as many people are testing and publicly declaring their HIV status. HIV is therefore not seen as a 'death sentence' but as any other health condition that needs effective management.

Table 3: Post Test Club Status, 2011

Names of PTCs	No. of Members	No. of PLWA as members	No. of PLWA supported	No. of OVCs supported	Total Savings (UGX)	Amount used on care and support in 2011 (UGX)
Dei	150	38	38	150	45,615,700	4,890,000
Lokokura	88	67	67	100	39,869,500	5,200,000
JOYODI	120	45	15	1	14,350,000	18,000
Angumu	55	17	11	7	9,800,000	314,000
Kayonga	59	13	7	6	7,804,200	217,000
Wathparwoth	55	12	12	1	12,256,000	456,000
Wangkadhu	74	23	18	3	7,612,800	215,000
Mututu	114	32	28	17	10,701,000	513,000
Mukale	99	56	18	11	2,275,000	149,000
Mangele	105	7	0	0	2,885,500	0
Puvona	93	54	3	4	2,413,000	150,000
Total	1,012	364	217	300	155,582,700	12,122,000

1 Note that VCT is for a biased group whose results do not represent the population prevalence rate. Nonetheless, the rate is still significantly high in this group.



Rweth of Panyimur standing fourth from left (Photo by Chonga J.B. Franklyne)

Case study 6: Reengaging Leadership for Effective HIV Prevention and Mitigation

AFARD started receiving community HIV prevention grant from Civil Society Fund in 2008. The first project - Fisher Community Anti AIDS project (FiCAP) – targeted Panyimur Sub County because of the high HIV prevalence rate among the MARPS – fisher folks. This project was implemented in five major fishing villages as epicenters namely, Mututu and Wangkadu in Boro Parish, Wathparwoth in Ganda parish and Angumu and Kayonga in Nyakagei Parish. These epicenters fed many smaller landing sites as their satellite areas. The epicenters and their satellites selected 12 local change agents who were trained as peer educators-cum-counselors (PECs) and condom promoters. As a result of the concerted efforts of these PECs, each of the epicenters formed a Post Test Club (PTC) composed of both HIV negative and HIV positive members.

To ensure effective operations and all inclusive membership, in Angumu, the elders constituted themselves into a “board” that is composed of 8 prominent traditional leaders, beach management unit officials and some religious leaders. The cardinal roles of the board include: oversight functions on PECs and the PTC activities; governance function of ensuring action plans are developed, approved by members and are used to guide the PTC operations; and resource mobilization to support the efforts of PTC members.

Unlike other PTCs where local leaders have not effectively picked interest and joined the fight against HIV/AIDS, in Angumu PTC with 55 members such an engagement has greatly improved the capacity of the PTC. Out of the UGX 9.8 million total fund of the PTC, the elders mobilized about UGX 1 million from beach management unit collections and the local churches. This fund rotates as a group loan and the interest earned are used to support 11 PLWAs.

Further, the leaders are committed to ensuring that behavior change communication and education reach out to everyone in order to avoid scenarios of “ignorance is death.” PECs and PTC members are given the opportunity to conduct awareness and education in prayer and funeral places. Religious leaders also echo that AIDS is not about promiscuity and unfaithful living as was perceived in the past. Meanwhile, the Beach Management Unit (BMU) has provided the PTC with a room as their office and store for all their community education equipment.

In this way, the community of Angumu has owned its fight against HIV/AIDS pandemic. They have a team that conducts BCCE targeting all social categories and risky behaviors. They have also developed a community care and support system that demystify HIV/AIDS stigma by engaging local efforts to the collective good of the community members who are living with AIDS. By opening the pulpit to community education and using the church as a fund raising avenue the pillars of the common good is being built. Building such an initiative will go a long way in leveraging local solutions to local problems.

Promoting (Girl) Child Education

Funded by gorta and AEE

The Crucial Gaps

The long history of political turbulence in West Nile destroyed its human capital. The 1979 war drove many people into exile while the rebellions that followed drove many people away from their homes besides destroying established education infrastructures. Even when people returned and the peace accord signed in 2003 there were many lost generation of young illiterate parents without the yearning for educated children. More so, many females, the majority of the population are uneducated due to the macho tradition that prioritizes boys' education (preparing heirs) over that of girls. To date, literacy rate in the region is 10 per cent point behind the national status. Vocational skills are also missing. The few children in schools perform poorly and hardly complete even the basic primary education.

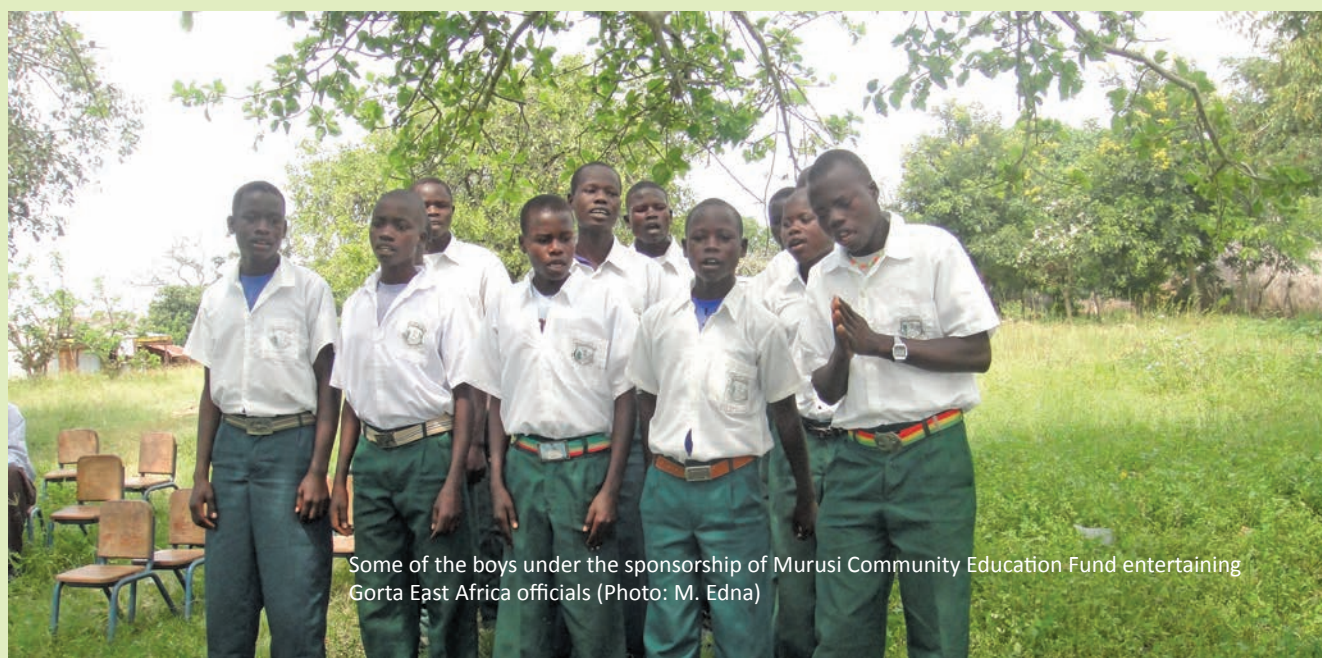
Our Responses

In the year, our effort was geared towards community mobilization for especially girl child education. AFARD staffs took on "role modelling" and talked about girls' education. Few visits were made to schools to encourage those already at schools to sustain the struggle. Groups were also encouraged to form education committees to replicate the success of other committees. And students benefitting from Murusi Education Fund were monitored for participation and performance. Besides, a UGX 10M was set aside to guarantee solar lighting for better education performance.

The results

From these works, 58 community groups formed functional education committees who mobilized children to enroll in (new cases), return to (dropout cases), and stay in (continuing cases) schools. They also urged parents to support children's education. Thus, gross enrolment rate for children aged 6-19 years increased from 96% in 2010 to 115% (130% for boys and 102% for girls). Drop out cases on the other hand reduced more for girls from 13.4% in 2010 to 8% in 2011 as compared to 12.6% to 10% for boys over the same period.

A number of community initiatives also emerged. Drabiju started a community school that now has 101 pupils enrolled in P1-3; though the classes are conducted under trees. Luku, Aliamu and Anyegele opened Functional Adult Literacy centers. And community education fund pilot scheme expanded beyond the 6 villages in Murusi into Kubbi Community that paid 21 students (3 in University), Aupi paid 5 girls, and Aupi Apo 4 students in secondary schools. Kalowang initiated and enforced education by-laws while Paleo set up a village register of all children of school going age and regularly monitored their school participation.



Some of the boys under the sponsorship of Murusi Community Education Fund entertaining Gorta East Africa officials (Photo: M. Edna)

Case Study 7: Murusi Community Financing Secondary Education

Murusi Parish, composed of six villages, located in Akworo Sub-county, Nebbi District is a known poorest sub-county in the district. Besides income poverty, the human capital of the community is low. By 2008 when AFARD entered into the community there was no advanced level education certificate holder. Top graduates were from Senior (4) Secondary Schools and Teacher Training Colleges. It was extremely hard to find more than five people in a village that could read and write except for Murusi Central village.

In 2009, WENDI among other interventions provided a booster loan fund designed to support education financing. Each of the 6 villages was expected to use the 10 million loan fund to engage in profitable household businesses and from the accrued interest earnings contribute UGX 500,000 annually into a pool. A Parish Education Committee was established comprising of BO leaders, local government officials and opinion leaders. This committee identified and vetoed who qualified to benefit from the scheme.

In 2010, the first team of beneficiaries was identified. Ten pupils who finished Primary Leaving Education (PLE) were transparently selected. The community failed to get additional two pupils as each village was expected to submit 2 pupils to the scheme. The short fall arose because Gottembe village did not have children who enrolled and sat for PLE. In 2011, additional 6 pupils were taken on-board bringing the total of children supported by the education fund to 16.

Compared to an entire Sub county Local Government that annually sponsors only 2 students (and often from influential households), such an initiative testifies to the fact that "where there is a development will communities commit whatever it takes to reap the envisaged results". Many parents have been so challenged by the initiative that they have resolved not to wait for the education fund but even on their own strive to pay for their children's education in secondary schools as Mr. Budu remarked, "If I can work hard to ensure that our community funds the education of children of our group members, what would prevent me from financing the education of my own children?"

Such a challenge has in turn also made it possible for Murusi parish alone to send 30 students to Secondary School in 2011 compared to only 2 in 2008. Often these children walk to and from school together. When asked what benefits they are getting from the sponsorship, Luka, Francis and Samson pointed out that "we are proud to be in school. We walk together and are always discussing the different subjects they teach us so that those who did not understand well in class also catch up... Because we are together, many students want to join our team. We are therefore challenged to see to it that many more children from Murusi also join secondary education..." "because with this opportunity", J. Luka added, "I feel I will be able to become a medical doctor to serve our community one day".

This initiative reveals that education can be funded collectively once the community appreciates the value of education. It also shows that loan schemes just like conditional grants can be used to fund education contrary to the notion that business benefits are individualized entrepreneurial efforts or rewards (the rational economist ideals). Finally, it also challenges the current liberalized education approach that rest children education squarely on the shoulder of their parents without due attention to the "capacities of such shoulders."

Citizenship Building: Increasing Participation in Local Governance

Funded by European Commission, FAO, and gorta

The Crucial Gap

AFARD works in collaboration with local governments by filling the gaps in their service delivery. This support is undertaken aware that people have both rights and responsibilities to decentralized public services. Government leaders are therefore required to be responsive and accountable to the needs of their people. Meanwhile, the people are required to demand for such services and accountability thereof. However, grassroots communities and especially women are not active participants in their local governance. Hardly do they demand for services and accountability from their local governments. Some even feel that they have nothing to do with their local government that has historically abandoned them.

Our responses

In the year, grassroots communities especially women leaders and group members were engaged to get involved in local governance so as to be able to voice their concern to their local governments. Women leaders were supported to strategically participate in planning meetings and sector meetings in order to push for their strategic and practical needs. Some 1,320 leaders from 30 sub counties and 174 parishes were trained in food and nutrition security planning skills. Further some newly elected councilors and their technical staffs were trained in gender responsive planning, budgeting, reporting, and auditing, among others. All WENDI group members were also encouraged to share their plans and reports with local governments as a commitment to accountability. And 5 district and 23 lower local governments were also involved in monitoring our programme in order to acknowledge the huge services needs in the communities as well as the essence of being transparent.

The Results

The strategic engagement with LLGs on FNS and women strategic needs witnessed improved responsiveness towards the community needs. NAADS projects, especially the food security component, in 2011/12 were directed in many LLGs towards the vulnerable groups. Likewise, the political will to support women's needs resulted into the alignment of budget allocation towards services sectors with many direct projects approved in response to women's lobby pressure. Further, the realization that community groups are transparent in their operations baited support from some LLGs – Kango, Akworo, Paidha, Abanga, Gimara, and Drajini - to ensuring that community groups in their areas complied with WENDI guidelines. Loan defaulters and fraudulent leaders were compelled (and in some cases arrested) to ensure that they did good their losses.



A health facility in Yumbe under construction

Case Study 8: Strategic advocacy, increased benefits for women under decentralization

For many years women had suffered ignorance and neglect, which resulted into poor and gendered service delivery. The many women structures - women council executives and women councilors – established by law from village to district levels were ineffective. Many members did not know their roles, the rights of women to public services and often they competed for recognition. Equally, many did not participate in local government planning processes; actions that made many local government plans and budgets to be insensitive to women's needs.

To avert this scenario, AFARD with the support of European Commission initiated the 3-year “Engendering Decentralized poverty resources management project” in 6 LLG's in Nebbi, Zombo and Yumbe in the West Nile region of Uganda. The project targeted increasing the knowledge and skills on human and women's rights and gender responsiveness among women and LLG leaders, enhancing women's participation in local government planning processes, and improving local government responsiveness to and accountability for local needs.

In this third year, women and LLG leaders were trained on their roles and responsibilities as well as gender sensitive planning, budgeting, monitoring, and reporting. Women were mobilized to get their priorities right and inserted in the LLG plans. They were also supported to conduct follow up of their approved projects. A strategic alliance was built among women leaders (old and new ones) so that they pursue a common cause – women's interests. This gave rise to the Women Forum at both Sub county and Parish levels.

Through the Women Forum: sensitization on women's rights has reached village levels; more women are mobilized to identify and prioritize their needs for inclusion in LLG plans; competent leaders are identified and supported to lobby LLG officials to insert those needs in plans and budgets; and consistent follow ups are effected to ensure that approved projects are implemented.

Some tangible projects awarded and implemented in line with Women Forum's advocacy in Drajini Sub county includes: Bore holes at the villages of ijigo, Elekile, Dacha, Aniku, Paladru and Ombadri; Shallow wells in Ajijinga and Juemvuti villages; the construction of an Out Patient Department in Pajama parish; a placenta pit in Dramba and Mongoyo health centres, a maternity ward in Dramba health centre; UGX 4,000,000 LGMSD was allocated for seeds for the women and a cassava chipping machine was procured for a women's group in Olivu.

The success of this approach had driven the Youths and PLWA to emulate the approach in many of the project sub counties. They now lobby councilors for their needs to be included in the sector plans and budgets.

What is evident from all these results is that regardless of the limited resource envelopes of lower local governments equity in service delivery can be attained once the affected population is empowered to articulate their needs to elected leaders. It also shows that there is need for these vulnerable groups to engage with local government officials beyond agenda setting. They should also engage in budget monitoring as budget allocations are always abused during budget implementation to the benefit of leaders.

Institutional Development of Community Groups

Funded by gorta, Irish Aid, Manos Unidas, CSF, and AEE

The Needs

AFARD works mainly with community groups. This is because they promote collective pooling of experiences, risks, information, and resources and provide coordinated investment cost-return equilibrium. For instance, a farming group corrects for commodity input-price failures through bulking and a savings group improves credit and insurance market failures by providing capital for income and consumption smoothing.

In the year, AFARD worked with 150 community groups (81 under **gorta**/Irish Aid support; 50 SHGs under AEE, 8 PTC under CSF, 6 Women Forum under European Commission, and 5 CBOs under Manos Unidas). However, majority of these groups are too weak to champion local development on their own. An assessment of the gorta/Irish Aid supported groups in 2010 showed that only 26 had reached take-off stage (scoring between 65-90% on model home and group compliance standards).

Our Responses

To strengthen the capacities of these groups, internally monthly meetings in which all committees reported on the progress and challenges of the months became a must. Elections of new leaders were done where term limits were reached and where mismanagements were rampant. Trainings in book-keeping, M+E, and gender issues were conducted. Diverse resource mobilization and prudence in financial management were the emphasis of all AFARD staffs. And District Network meetings were held to promote co-learning and engagement with LLGs.

The Results

- More than half of the groups held elections of new office bearers which ushered in a 10% point increase in number of women taking up leadership position from a dismal 29%.
- The leadership skills inculcated over the years saw many group members take up positions in the February 2011 National General Elections especially in Jangokoro, Menze, Ombeniva, Yiba, and Enjanyangaku. While 124 members (83 males and 41 females) contested for various post, 74 members (49 males and 25 females) – a 60% win rate – were elected into local governments as councilors.
- The financial management training woke up many members to start to demand for financial accountability. In Mawa, Aleiva, Vurra, Pakadha, Alionyanya and others, interim committees were established as frauds were identified especially on the use of local funds. Some leaders were also reported to local governments.
- The different groups have mobilized funds from diversified sources. This fund is used as a loan fund by the groups.



Mrs. Ayikoru Francis, LC 3
Councillor of Rhinocamp Sub
county (Photo: A. Andrew)

Case Study 9: Citizenship Building - WENDI Programme Empowering Members to Take Up Leadership Position

WENDI programme cherishes the empowerment of grassroots communities as a critical mass for building local capacity to initiate, own, and sustain local development. One area of attention is participatory leadership because it is about co-management of community affairs in a transparent and accountable manner. However, participatory leadership has been noted to benefit not just WENDI member households and groups. Many forward looking members saw it as something that can improve on their local governance. Such a realization provoked a number of WENDI programme members to join the recently concluded elections. Mrs. Ayikoru Francis, the Treasurer of Ombeniva Gorta Programme is one of these people. Her group is located in Ombeniva Village, Awuvu Parish, Rhino Camp Sub-County, Madi-Okollo County in Arua District. Mrs. Ayikoru Francis dropped out of school in Senior One due to lack of school fees. She later got married to Mr. Droma Francis of Ombeniva village. She recalled,

Before I joined the group in 2009, I was a tailor who operated a small scale business within Rhino Camp Trading Center. I was too shy. I feared standing before the public and taking up any leadership position in the community. This came to change when our village (Ombeniva) was selected by Rhino Camp Sub-County Local Government to benefit from West Nile Development Initiative (WENDI). Members saw the leadership potential in me and chose me to be the Treasurer. I resisted but I was encouraged that every member will overtime take a leadership position sooner or later. Knowing that by refusing now, I will only be postponing the problem, I accepted the position. We worked transparently with all the members making decisions collectively. In this way, I gained confidence in the management of public affairs. At the same time, when we would be interacting with other people, I would feel that something is not right in the leadership of our local governance. I started getting motivated to take a bigger leadership role. Indeed, when Electoral Commission declared that in 2011 there would be elections of new leaders, I discussed with my husband and some of my group members about my motivation. They approved of my idea. I picked the nomination papers and contested for the election which I easily won as the Women Councillor representing Eramva Parish to the Sub-County.

Mrs. Ayikoru Francis attributes her motivation and success to WENDI project that helped her fight public phobia, build leadership quality, gain exposure to local governance issues, acquire social networks, but above all to demonstrate her trustworthiness and honesty in the community.

Mr. Selly Ahmed in his New LC 3 Office (Photo: A. Abakari)



A similar case occurred with Hon. Selly Ahmed, the newly elected Chairman of Ariwa Sub county, Yumbe district. Before the 31-year old became “someone” as it is known because he is saluted and bowed to, Selly was a “nobody”. He was one of the despised and unrewarded Grade III Primary School teachers who could not easily be recognized on any occasion. From 2009, he also became the Chairman of Injanyangaku WENDI Programme. He successfully stirred the near collapsing BO to life. Members’ commitment to group work and attendance in meetings and trainings improved remarkable. From a BO fund of UGX 3 million he developed new strategies that saw increased BO garden acreage, enterprise analysis of crops to be grown, bulk sales of produce, and by end of the 2011, Injanyagaku had UGX 11 million. This service with devotion and dedication turned into a political asset come election time as he said,

The foundation stone of what I am today was laid by WENDI programme. Through leadership trainings, group meetings, and exchange visits to successful farmers both my capacities and exposure to the community outside my BO vicinity were built. I did away with the “community fear” I had in the past. I was also able to show exemplary leadership qualities. Added to the confidence I had gained and the support I had not only from the members of our BO but also from the communities around, I ably defeated two of my opponents with 346 votes even when I had limited finance to run my campaigns.

While Hon. Selly now has the position to serve a population wider than Injanyangaku WENDI programme, he still notes that his reign will learn more from the holistic WENDI approach to fighting poverty. He echoes that “our people need good leaders; leaders who can “do what they preach” – plan with the people, honor agreed upon plans, focus more on results rather than means, and account for all actions. WENDI members are storming public leadership. The community warmly appreciates their efforts and sees them as a new brand of leaders who are pro-poor and trust worthy.

AFARD Sustainability Building

Funded by gorta, Irish Aid and SNV



A warehouse near completion in Yumbe Town Council (Photo: A. Abakari)

The Need

By and large AFARD derives a bigger share (>90%) of its revenue from donor funds. Such a "high risk donor dependency" in the current wake of global economic recession and donor directed projects had since 2008 inspired the Board to optimistically explore how to increase local resource base.

Our Responses

This year marked a pilot business phase development. A Business Development Plan (BDP) was formulated with the support from **gorta** and SNV in order to promote effective marketing of farmers' produce- the missing value addition in the production chain. Central in this BDP is that marketing is to be conducted through a centralized bulking and procurement system given that few major buyers operate from within the region.

Through this venture:

- Two staffs - a Business Development Manager and a Warehouse Manager were recruited.
- A warehouse (18.6m X 11.6m) to serve Yumbe and Moyo farmers is under construction in Yumbe.
- AFARD is exploring DFID funding to private sector window for a processing (grain cleaning) plant.
- UGX 200 million start-up procurement fund to raise the big volume that can attract major buyers was established.
- Bulk Marketing Guidelines was developed, staffs inducted on its use, and supported to disseminate the practice among 78 groups.
- AFARD is linked to other stakeholders under the Multi Stakeholders Platform for Oilseed subsector in West Nile.
- AFARD was supported to negotiate prices with big buyers – Shares (U) Ltd and Olam (U)
- Staffs were trained in soya beans field management and marketing dynamics.
- Production and Marketing Committees of 78 BOs were trained in the basics of collective marketing.
- We are piloting the Rural Information System

The Results

Due to this pilot business approach as at the end of December 2011, a total of UGX 13 million was generated. This fund was used to offset the high transport cost especially for Yumbe and Moyo community group farmers. The Production and Marketing Committees have also built leverage with other non-group members thereby widening the fair price benefit spillover; actions that is igniting the realization that farming too can be conducted as a business.

Our Organizational Development



Gorta visiting team L-R Rebecca Amukhoye, Lorenza Quadrini, Sean Gaule & Jennifer Coyne (Photo: L. Alfred)



Mr Alex Bakole (centre) during his ABA Degree graduation at Uganda Martyrs University (Photo: C. Wilfred)



Annual Board Meeting (Photo: C. Wilfred)

In the year, AFARD as an organization witnessed the following achievements:

- Restructuring and recruitment of staff: The Board restructured the organization and harmonized the human resource management guidelines (particularly the remuneration systems) to guarantee internal equity. Additional staffs were employed increasing the number from 17 in 2010 to 28 in 2011.
- Revision of financial guidelines: AFARD revised its financial management guidelines in line with its current level of growth and the 2010 audit recommendations. Useful comments were sourced from Jennifer Coyne, **gorta's** Head of Finance and Administration and KPMG.
- Revision of monitoring and reporting system: A harmonized monitoring framework and its data collection tool - Monitoring, Reporting, Accounting and Learning (MRAL) Tool were developed. This was piloted in WENDI programme in order to allow for upscaling into all AFAD projects in 2012.
- Plan, Budget, and Report sharing: In the year, the 2010 annual report and 2011 annual plan and budget and quarterly report documents were produced and distributed to all major stakeholders – district and lower local governments, district NGO Forum, community groups, gorta, and AFARD board and programme staffs.
- Joint staff reviews meetings: In order to promote programme reflection and learning, we held 8 quarterly meetings that brought together all staff to plan and share views on successful experiences, challenges and lessons learned.
- District Network Meetings: These quarterly meetings were conducted in Nebbi, Zombo, Rhinocamp, Yumbe and Obongi. They were attended by both BO leaders and local government officials. The meetings discussed performance, challenges and solutions.
- Monitoring visits: In order to deepen accountability and learning, AFARD projects were visited by:
 - o The learning team from PELUM Uganda, Self-Help Africa and EMESCO.
 - o Two **gorta** teams consisting first of Jennifer Coyne, Head of Finance & Administration, Lorenza Quadrini, Programmes Officer, and Sean Gaule, Gorta Board Member and later by Rebecca Amukhoye and David Ojara Okotboth of **gorta** East Africa Office.

- o SNV East and Southern Africa Region Director - Mr. Worku Behonegu, Country Director - Jeanette de Regt, and the Economic Advisor Beryard Conilh de Beyssac.
 - o Peter Ashton from the Delegation of the European Commission in Uganda.
 - o Leaders from District and Lower Local Government officials.
 - o The Board of Directors.
- Staff Development: AFARD continued to support further skills development of its staffs. For instance, Ms. Florence Candiru is pursuing CPA Stage 2 in Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Uganda in Kampala; Edna Manano, Alex Bakole and Gerald Jakony are undertaking ABA Sustainable Agriculture in Uganda Martyrs University; and Gladys Biwinjere in pursuing a Diploma course in Secretarial Services in Uganda College of Commerce, Pakwach. In the year, Dr. Alfred Lakwo attended a 3-week certificate course at the Coady International Institute in Canada. On a good note, Alex Bakole graduated last November.

We also promoted staff participation in workshops and conferences. For instance, in the year Dr. Alfred Lakwo represented NGOs working with FAO in the mainstreaming rights to food in sub-national plans in Sierra Leone. Equally, Wilfred Cwinyai, Edna Manano, and Juma B. Bale participated in entrepreneurship, investment analysis, and seed security trainings organized by PELUM. Fiona Ochora and Candiru Florence participated in UWASNET trainings. Meanwhile Flavia J. Vuni, Chonga JB Franklyn, Eric R. Biyala, Kumakech Richard, and Norbert Oyirowoth benefited from CSF funded trainings.

- Internship placement: We continue to provide professional learning opportunities for students. In the year we enrolled Ronald Okello from Makerere Social Institute; Jamila Fuambe and Olivia Kermundu from Makerere University Business School; and Ozelle Living, Javuru Colline, Kimira Innocent and Ofoyrwot Samson from Uganda Christian University.
- Organizational assessment and staff appraisal exercises: Through SNV we were able to assess staff capacity for engagement in production for the market. Straight Talk Foundation under CSF also conducted organizational assessment with a focus on HIV/AIDS quality services delivery. Meanwhile, **gorta**-East Africa office assessed our value addition gaps to 2012 programme implementation. These assessments have evolved into: (i) a 2-year (2011-12) MoU with SNV for strengthening our Production for the Market; and (ii) an MoU with Straight Talk Foundation (STF) under the new Uganda AIDS Commission's Civil Society Fund (CSF) decentralized capacity building strategy meant to support the objectives of the new National Strategic plan for HIV/AIDs. Under this MoU, AFARD staffs already had an exposure visit to Gulu. Meanwhile the Finance team will benefit from Tally accounting software training to improve financial planning and budgeting and basic HR planning skills.
- Asset acquisition: In the year we procured 1 motor vehicle for Yumbe office, 2 motor cycles for Nebbi, 5 laptops, 3 digital cameras, 1 solar system for Yumbe office, and a photo copier. We also received a donation from EC Election Monitors of 1 laptop, 2 notebooks, 2 mobile printers, 4 tables, 8 mobile phones, 4 boards, 6 chairs, and 3 cup boards among other small accessories like back-bags, riding jackets, mouse, and modems.
- We assessed AFARD's compliance with the National NGO Quality Assurance Mechanisms (QuAM) guidelines. We scored 96% (52/54 indicators). We therefore applied for certification by the District QuAM Committee. We are waiting for their assessment.
- AFARD retained its membership and improved its participation in district and national networks such as: Uganda National NGO Forum and District NGO Forum in Nebbi, Yumbe, and Moyo; PELUM – Uganda Chapter; Uganda National AIDS Service Organizations (UNASO) and Network of AIDS Service Organizations in Nebbi; and Water Integrity Network (WIN) and Uganda Water and Sanitation NGO Network (UWASNET). On a good note, AFARD was elected on the Board of Directors of UWASNET to represent West Nile region.

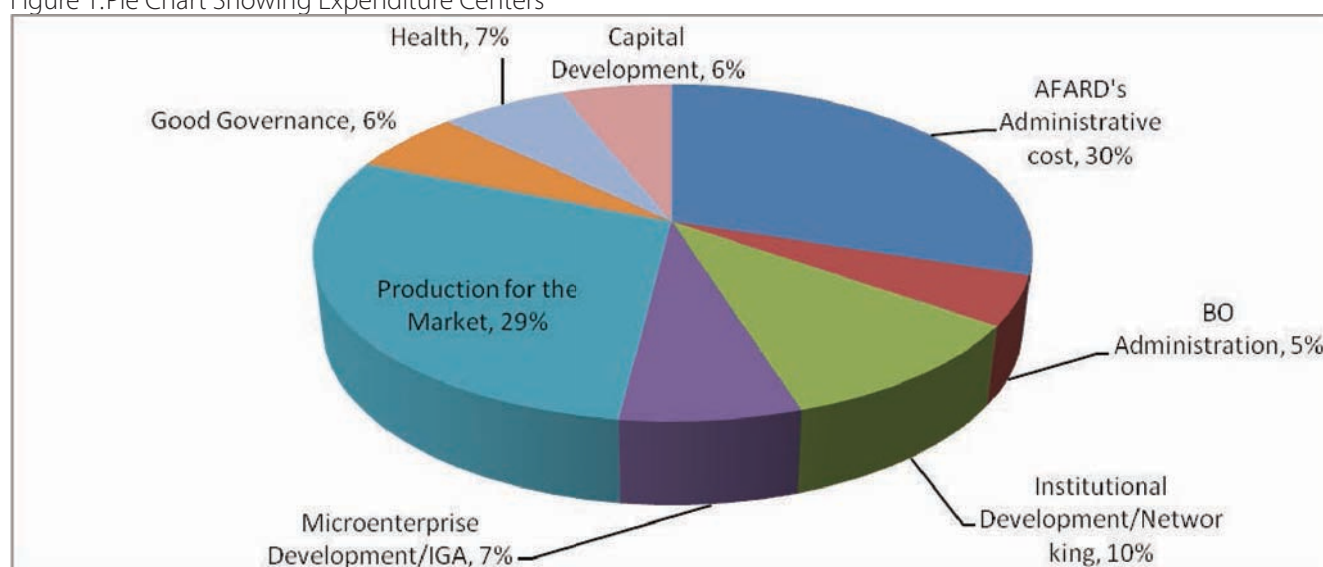
Financial performance

Revenue Performance

The actual budget for 2011 was UGX 5.1 Billion. More than 90% of this fund came from donor funds. However, this amount was a 5% point decline from the annual budget estimate. The main reasons for the decline in the actual budget was the The global economic downturn affected our resource mobilization drive. A number of our proposals could not be accepted not because of poor quality. Rather, many agencies (Netherlands Embassy, American Embassy, St. Lewis Foundation, Uganda Health Marketing Group - had inadequate funds to take on new partners. Further, some of the planned projects like the Global Fund Round 7 with Ministry of Health and INclusion's Nebbi Inclusive Development Project never took off.

Expenditure Performance

Figure 1: Pie Chart Showing Expenditure Centers



The main expenditure center, as the figure above indicates, was towards the ignition of the newly introduced production for the market and assets (P4MA). This component accounted for 28% of actual expenditures and it involved a huge capital investment in seeds, pesticides, warehouse construction and start-up training in agronomy and bulk marketing together with the employment of staffs meant to coordinate its market-centric approaches. Added to its antecedent expenses in capital investments of 24% in staff increment in production sector and equipping and tooling, this was the single biggest investment in 2011. Yet, without the technical support from SNV the actual cost would have been much higher.

Project Audit

In the course of the year, the following independent audits were conducted:

- As AFARD, we conducted periodic audits of the BOs we are funding. The results of these audit helped finance department to customize mentoring sessions aimed at improved financial reporting.
- KPMG audited our 2010 Final Accounts.
- CSF conducted an Environment Control and Financial Management System Assessment with the findings used to improve our finance guidelines.

Operational Focus

To address impediments to deepening and sustaining our impacts, in 2012, AFARD's planned 4.8 billion budget will target:

- Ensuring sustained food security from own seeds/planting materials.
- Strengthening production for the market so that households and groups increase their incomes and asset base.
- Increasing access to safe water in water scarce areas while sustaining safe sanitation and hygiene.
- Promoting combination HIV prevention.
- Entrenching community education policing together with the replication of community education fund and solar power for education.
- Citizenship building on basic human and women's rights to public services.
- Institutional development of partner community groups.
- Knowledge management of distinguished model and or practice of excellence.
- Anchoring AFARD's sustainability in the production for the market and asset strategy.

Table 4: Planned Outreach in 2012

Projects/Programmes	Males	Females	Total	Women and % of total	Channels	Districts covered				
						Nebbi	Zombo	Arua	Yumbe	Moyo
WENDI Programme	35,612	37,573	73,185	51%	81 groups	X	X	X	X	X
Increasing West Nile Smallholder Farmers' Agricultural Productivity	35,612	37,573	73,185	51%	81 groups	X	X	X	X	X
Fisher Community Anti-AIDS Project (FICAP)	28,381	30,734	59,115	52%	8 Fishing Villages	X				
Payera Community Development Project	2,768	2,999	5,767	52%	2 lower local governments	X				
Jangokoro Food Security Project	705	718	1,423	50%	5 groups		X			
Mainstreaming Rights to Food in sub-national plans	810	535	1,345	39%	178 parishes	X	X		X	
TOTAL	103,888	110,132	214,020	52%						

SHG Approach Uplifting the dignity of the Very Poor



Mrs. Gipatho Rose, 62 years old, is a member of Can Cido Lando group under Payera Community Development Program in Erussi Sub county, Nebbi district. She is a widow with a humble yet poor family that depended mainly on farming and often sold some produce at Erussi and Nyalip markets to buy daily needs like paraffin, and salt as she narrated, "my husband & I used to sleep on a papyrus mat, had few household utensils, relied on my husband for any support yet he was a drunkard that could not provide everything for the home." This lifestyle Rose says caused domestic unrest with her late husband. Still, she recounts, life was miserable after the death of her husband. She had no one to turn to for help. The few assets they had could hardly be disposed off to secure even the basic meals. She had to go on and at times wept when she was alone.



"This is how I joined my group as a very poor person," she spoke with a beaming smile. My children were not supportive of the action as one child, she recalled, told her groups of poor people don't attract help. However, AEE through Payera Project provided her with 2 sacks of cassava cuttings which she planted and harvested 12 sacks that she sold at UGX 216,000. With the money, she opened more land and planted cassava and bought 5 goats. These goats increased to 8 in number and she used 4 goats on her son's burial. She also exchanged one goat with a pig which she hopes will earn her more income in future.



With the incomes she has been generating from these diversified activities, Mrs. Gipatho Rose who used to sleep on a papyrus mat now has a bed with a mattress. She bought more household utensils, built one grass thatched house, sleeps under a mosquito net, and can easily buy clothes for herself. Mrs. Gipatho Rose also said she eats 3 meals a day and at the end of every year she has as cash savings worth UGX 200,000 up from a dismal UGX 50,000 in the past. She is also hiring labor to farm her garden and her children are now happy with her since they have finally noticed change in her life. Mrs. Gipatho Rose wants in addition to her garden to start a piggery project and have a large banana plantation all intended to increase her household income and food security. With a smile, she concluded that, "SHG approach if taken serious is beneficial not just to the individual members but the whole community. It opens ways where there was none and gives dignity to the very poor to also own assets and be visible in a community".

Members of Board of Directors



Rt. Rev. Sabino Ocan Odoki
Chair Board of Directors



Kura Vasco
Vice-chair Board of Directors



Gloria Royce Androa
Committee Member



His Grace, Henry Luke Orombi
Committee Member



Justice Anglin Flavia Senoga
Committee Member



Mr Michael B. Okecha Board Secretary



Dr. Sam O. Orach Ex-officio
member

AFARD Top Managers



Dr. Alfred Lakwo
Executive Director



Daniel Godswill
Business Development Manager



Florence Candiru
Finance and Administration Manager

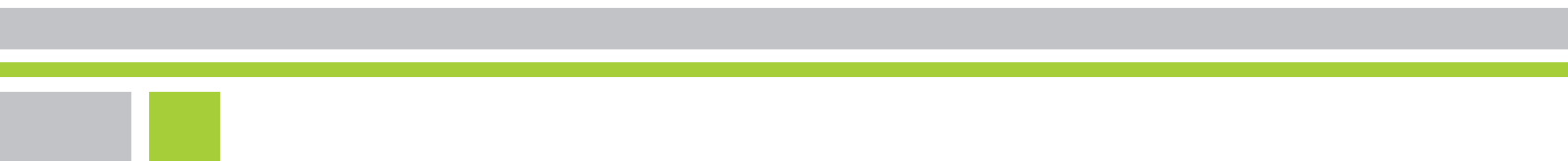


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