



EUROPEAN UNION



Gender Transformation & Empowerment

ENHANCING WOMEN'S INVOLVEMENT IN SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY PROCESSES: A DOCUMENTATION OF LOCAL EXPERIENCES

PROGRAMME NEWSLETTER

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Overall objective

Enhance women's oversight capacity to participate in the socio economic and political processes in the regions of Acholi, Karamoja and West Nile

Specific objectives

- i. Enhance capacity of women and young people to participate in good governance and social accountability processes
- ii. To facilitate CSO capacity development to participate in Local Government planning, monitoring and advocacy for effective social service delivery.
- iii. To provide relevant information for effective civic engagement between duty bearers (CSOs, LGs) and right holders

Results:

- i. Local Capacity of Vulnerable women and young people enhanced and awareness raised on Social Accountability at Grass root levels
- ii. Improved Capacity, Communication and Visibility for CSOs engaging in Social Accountability
- iii. Strengthened Government mechanism for dialogue, communication, consulting in negotiation on key policies including improved access to information for citizens and CSOs



Jackie Ewudopia —Coordinator Yumbe Gender Based Violence Network (YUGNET) chairing a community meeting ahead of a community led monitoring exercise in the district

Sustaining Women's Leadership and Building the Women's Movement to Enhance Social Accountability Processes

Overview of Programme

Accountability is broadly defined as an obligation of those holding power to take responsibility for their behavior and actions with the ultimate objective of improving service delivery to the citizens who have given them their mandate.

Establishing social accountability mechanisms has great potential for improving governance and making service delivery more effective in community governance through empowering citizens.

In Uganda, accountability failures persist because several links in the chain of accountability – from citizens to the government – have either never existed or are severely weak.

Uganda Women's Network through the "Sustaining Women's Leadership and Building the Women's Movement to Enhance Social Accountability

Processes" Programme set out to strengthen and exploit the potential of institutions involved in strengthening social accountability.

The need to address socio-cultural factors which hamper effective participation of citizens in public decision making and undermine mechanisms for a genuine downward accountability of leaders and administrators to the community was envisioned to be addressed by this programme.

The programme implemented by UWONET worked towards enhancing human rights of vulnerable groups especially women and young people striving to achieve a Uganda society free of all forms of gender based discrimination. The programme operates in three different regions of the country. The programme strived to increase networking in

several districts and at national level to effectively engage institutions and governance structures for gender equality.

The programme targeted women and young people and CSOs in the districts of Yumbe, Kotido, Abim, Agago, Lamwo and Kaboong. In addition are Women – Councillors

(district & Sub County), Women CSO leaders, Community women groups, District women networks, Disabled women, Young women leaders in higher institutions of learning.

Improved Capacity, Communication and Visibility

for CSOs engaging in Social Accountability

Strengthened Government mechanism for dialogue, communication, consulting in negotiation on key policies including improved access to information for citizens and CSOs

Raising Awareness on Social Accountability at Grassroots levels

Being a citizen carries responsibility. Citizens need to be aware of the critical role they play in the democratic process and understand the importance of participating in the governance process. One cannot call a nation a democracy without citizen's participation.

Provisions in the Constitution of Uganda affirm the notion that public resources are held and should be managed and used by public officers for the benefit of Ugandans. Article XXVI (i) of the National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy of the Constitution of

Uganda affirms this and states that "All public offices shall be held in trust for the people". As a result, Ugandans should know how their resources are used and participate in processes that promote transparency, accountability and effective use of resources.

Faces of the Beneficiary Communities



Community members from the Acholi, Karamoja and West Nile regions of Uganda who benefited from the social accountability and civic engagement initiatives

“Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we’ve been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.” Barack Obama

Challenges in West Nile, North and North Eastern Uganda

One third of chronically poor households are in the greater Northern Uganda. The inequitable access to basic social services experienced by women, youth, children and the poor, particularly in rural areas, heightens their vulnerability and this in turn further increases their poverty levels. There are many indicators of disparities, such as the highest sero-prevalence rate in the country in 2004/5 (9.4%).

With returned stability to the region, the majority of the 1.8 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) have returned home, resulting in an increased demand for quality public services. Although notable gains have been made, communities in the Karamoja, West Nile and Acholi regions still face significant barriers to public services. The impact of the conflict on public service infrastructure, resources and systems is significant.

The regions continue to face variety of social, economic, political, and administrative challenges including high inflation, low salaries/pensions of public servants, chronic resource shortages, inadequate public goods and services, unethical individual behavior, and kinship and nepotism, amongst others. Coupled with these factors, corruption remains a major problem across Uganda.

Mechanisms to Address Challenges in Service Delivery

There is a general consensus that improving community involvement and increasing accountability of service providers to their constituencies is a good way to improve service delivery outcomes. Community participation in service delivery significantly enhances the responsiveness and accountability of service providers to community members. Effective

provision of basic services can contribute to state legitimacy and is vital for poverty reduction.

UWONET has facilitated community led monitoring visits for community members to learn about government programmes available in their localities. Through these monitoring visits the community members have been at the fore front of demanding for the required and better

service delivery in their communities.

UWONET has also facilitated citizen's platforms to provide citizens an opportunity to articulate their preferences, concerns and other proposals on improving service delivery. The Citizen's Platform provided space for an interface and engagement between the community members and the district leadership.

Why citizen participation in service delivery?

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1. Inclusion of the marginalized and the poor in decision making would lead to pro-poor policies hence assuring | equitable service provision. | standards of services expected. |
| | 2. Quality of service is likely to be a result of citizens input and feedback on the | 3. Promotes ownership and sustainability |

- of the public service infrastructure and resources
4. Creates more transparency and accountability for public resources because people are aware of the funds available
 5. Increases the pace of development as resources are used better
 6. Deepens democracy because leaders become more answerable to the people

Building Local Capacities

It is critical that communities are engaged in service delivery project design and management in a meaningful way. This is vital for ensuring local ownership of projects and can help to build local capacity. UWONET through the programme has empowered district based civil society organizations, district leadership, duty bearers and community members at all levels to strengthen management and leadership capacity, governance practices and organizational

management systems in terms of service delivery in their localities.

At the inception of the programme, UWONET conducted consultative meetings with the district leaders which culminated into community dialogues. The purpose of these community dialogues was to collect the views of the community on how they want the programme to be carried out and also to gauge their knowledge of social accountability.

Based on the consultations skills, development trainings in each of the selected districts for the young people and the women were conducted. The purpose of these trainings was to equip women and young women leaders with communication, advocacy, and leadership skills. Through this, a pool of public service delivery analysts, lobbyists and advocates for improved service delivery and good governance was built in the districts of operation.

Mentorship and Coaching to Civil Society Organizations

UWONET recognizes that in order for its advocacy efforts to achieve the desired impact, networking, coalitions and partnerships are key and therefore must be continually built and strengthened. UWONET built the capacity of women's organizations at the district level to effectively engage in public service delivery planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

To enhance and monitor progress, UWONET conducted mentorship sessions on the gaps identified by CSOs in the districts of operation. The gaps identified included; limited capacity and knowledge in development of organizational policy documents, resource mobilization and proposal writing. Other areas of capacity concern tackled during the mentorship sessions include report writing and developing Monitoring and Evaluation tools for organizations.

The district based organizations testified to increased confidence in operating as civil society organizations after the mentorship session. The CSOs' role and commitment in promoting quality service delivery was further ignited and affirmed. 15 CSOs were trained in each district. It has been



Trainee Presenting on the Process of Developing a Proposal



Group work during the mentorship session

"It's the little things citizens do. That's what will make the difference. My little thing is planting trees." Wangari Maathai

documented that the trained CSOs further grouped up and formed Social Accountability Networks in each district to ease the monitoring processes.

Citizen's Platforms

Citizen's platforms refer to dialogue meetings between community members, civil society and the district leadership. The citizen's platforms provides an interface between the community members and duty bearers to discuss the service delivery gaps in their locality and make recommendations on improving the situation.

Citizen platforms aimed at enhancing interface and dialogue between citizens and leaders. The entire activity was well received by the community and the duty bearers. Present during these events were the district leadership including; the Local Council V Chairpersons with the Executives, Resident District Commissioners, Mayors, Chief Administrative Officer,s Police officers, sector heads and the area Councilors, the media, opinion leaders and the entire community.

Dialogues provide a platform for information disclosure, demystification and dissemination; beneficiary/user participation and consultation; complaints handling; and independent and/or participatory monitoring.

This activity led to improvements in the service delivery as well as accountability from the government and elected representatives in the districts of operation. It improved communication and relationship between duty bearers and the community. 12 Citizen's Platforms were held across the districts of operation.

Community Led Monitoring

Community Led Monitoring is a form of public oversight, driven by local information needs and community values, to increase the accountability and quality of social services. Within the programme framework, members of the community benefiting from a public service programme generate demands, suggestions, critiques and data that

they then feed back to the district leadership implementing the program during a debrief meeting.

Community Led Monitoring aims not only to generate the appropriate information for high quality service delivery but also seeks to strengthen local decision-making, public education, community capacity and effective public participation in local

government and public service delivery.

Community Led Monitoring has for example facilitated the increase of quality and accountability of health services by enabling local people to evaluate and direct the health services available to them as well as hold healthcare providers accountable.

Cross Monitoring and Shared Learning Foras

Cross Monitoring is a strategy that has been

adopted by beneficiary communities to ensure

objective reporting on the service delivery in their

localities. In this case, communities of Sub County A would monitor service delivery in Sub County B and Vis Versa. It has been noted that communities are more honest when speaking with members from another community. Cross Monitoring has also reduced the

risks and threats associated with monitoring service delivery.

Shared Learning Foras are a platform that has been adopted by UWONET to promote exchange of information and sharing of experiences. These brought

together various duty bearers and rights holders among others including, councilors, cultural and religious leaders, community monitors, district technocrats and CSOs.

Local Actions for Quality Service Delivery

For positive social change to happen, communities need to get involved in service delivery and exercise their role. Community monitors, civil society organizations and local groups have campaigned against the poor service delivery in their own communities.

The documented local actions have taken different forms. Some have happened in small, everyday actions and others in creative ways using large-scale or far reaching avenues like the media. Rooted within the community,

the community members create a push from the inside—their actions being the most powerful in improving service delivery in their localities.

Empowering the local communities has revealed the power of demand-side approaches in enhancing governance through the concepts of citizens' voice, accountability, and responsiveness. It has provided lessons on the establishment of social accountability mechanisms, thereby empowering the local

communities, who represent a majority of society.

Far from being passive observers of development and governance discourse, an increasingly vigilant civil society is critiquing, monitoring, and contesting the role of the state and its institutions in shaping and controlling the forms of governance. Working against heavy odds, many civil society groups have demonstrated the power of ordinary people in bringing about changes in service delivery.

Agricultural Sector: Empowering Rural Communities and rendering them self-reliant

Alio Ada Women's group in Yumbe District in 2010 was selected to benefit from the District Livelihood support Programme (DLSP). The DLSP is aimed at improving the standard and sustainability of the

livelihoods of poor households in the rural areas. One of strategies used to empower rural communities and render them self-reliant is through the provision of 50 goats to selected groups across the district. Alio Ada Women's group among others received goats which were not of the quality promised by the DLSP office. The women approached the Yumbe GBV Network (YUGNET— a group nurtured by UWONET) to seek audience with the district leadership so as to voice their dissatisfaction over the low quality inputs.

After a visit to the farm, the LC V Chairperson charged the DLSP



Member of Alio Ada Women's group in Yumbe District who received goats as a beneficiary of the District Livelihood Support Programme (DLSP)

“Healthy citizens are the greatest asset any country can have.” Winston Churchill

office to purchase the right quality of goats which were given to the group as compensation. Currently the farm has 70 goats. The group members testify that their standard of living has improved and the goats provided solutions when they are faced with challenges. For example, one of the member's daughter (Christine) had been chased from school due to lack of school fees. She approached the rest of the members who agreed to sell a goat to pay the fees. “Christine has been able to continue with school and is now attending high school” a group member testified.

Health Sector: Facilitating Maternal and Child Healthcare

For five years, Nurse Akiya Pauline Grace solely operated Madi Kiloch Health Centre II in Padibe Sub County, Lamwo District. Nurse Grace offered services to the community as the in charge, nursing assistant and midwife—all at the same time. This situation went on ‘unnoticed’ until 2012.

A community led monitoring visit in 2012 to Madi Kiloch Health Centre II revealed that Nurse Grace was the only person working at the Health Centre serving about 1,000 people. The monitoring visit did not only unveil the inadequate staffing problem at the health centre but also brought to light the lack of infrastructure at the health centre. It was revealed that the health centre did not have a water source and patients had to fetch water from a borehole 2kms away. It was also revealed that the health centre did not have labour beds and mothers would give birth on the floor. Further still the solar panels at the centre were not working, hence no lighting. “Mothers give birth using candles or phone light or torches” commented a community member.

Nurse Grace in the Labor ward with the Labor bed donated by Rotary Club of Kitgum



The community monitors led by the Organization for the Development of Women in Lamwo (ODOWOL) wrote a report of the findings which they presented to the District Leadership including the District Health Officer and the Local Council V Chairperson. A second visit together with the district leadership was then organized to the health centre.

The situation at Madi Kiloch Health Centre II attracted the attention of journalists from Mighty Fire FM in Kitgum who made a public appeal to seek support for improving the standards at the health



Patients at Madi Kiloch Health Centre II wait to be attended to

centre. The appeal did not fall on deaf ears, the Rotary Club of Kitgum heard the appeal and came to the rescue of the Padibe West community members.

The Rotary Club of Kitgum provided 40 Mama Kits, 1 labour bed and 2 resting beds (after birth) to the health centre. The club also supported the recruitment of 3 extra staff who were posted to the health centre. These staff recruited include 1 enrolled nurse, 1 midwife and 1 nursing assistant.

Health Sector: Improving diagnostics using an Ultrasound

Chances are, someone you know has undergone an ultrasound exam. Whether it's to get a first glimpse of a developing baby in the womb or to determine the risk of heart attack, doctors use ultrasound widely in women and men, children and the elderly to gain advanced insights into the inner workings of the body.

At Kotido Health Centre IV, an ultra sound machine was purchased and handed over to the hospital administration but no personnel qualified to operate it was hired. During a monitoring visit to the health centre, the community monitors found the machine tacked away for 2 years and the patients sighted the lack of a qualified sonographer to operate it. The monitoring visit also revealed that women were facing difficulties in their pregnancies which could have been detected using an ultra sound scan.

This situation was brought to the attention of Nakere Rural Women's Association (NARWOA – an organization UWONET has nurtured) who sought audience with the district leadership to discuss the situation. During the debrief meeting, the District Health Officer pledged to incorporate the recruitment of a sonographer in the district health budget.

The budget allocation was passed in the Financial Year 2012/2013 and Sister Florence was recruited and trained to operate the ultra sound machine. Sister Florence testified that the trends in pregnancy complications have reduced since she started work. Patients at the health centre confirmed that the ultrasound has helped families and their doctors determine what's what's wrong or not well with the body and determine the best, most effective means possible to get and stay healthy especially during pregnancy.



Sister Florence performing an ultra sound scan on a pregnant woman at Kotido Health centre IV. She then explains to the patient what was revealed in the scan.

The Ultra Sound Scan Machine at the Kotido Health IV



Above: Community members fetch water from the Town Council Borehole.
Left: A school girl drinks some water fetched from the borehole.

Water Sector: Sources with Functional Water User Committees Never Run Dry

Water of adequate quantity and quality is essential to sustaining human life. Although progress has been made countrywide in providing access to improved water sources, challenges remain in many rural communities. Yumbe District has been no stranger to these challenges. Community members still have to move long distances to fetch clean water, the aging infrastructure and the inability by the poorer community members to pay for the service.

The secret to successful water source management in Uganda has been through the Water User Committees. The Water User Committees comprise of selected community members who are committed to the management of the water source. The water user committees are comprised of five members. They collect a minimal fee from residents for maintaining the boreholes as well as mitigate factor that lead to unnecessary breakdowns.

During a community led monitoring exercise in Yumbe Town Council, community members cried out over the poor management of the borehole by the Water User Committee. The community members also revealed that they were being charged extra fee (which was at the discretion of the committee members) in addition to the monthly service fee of UGX 1,000. They confessed that this was straining their household finances and forcing some of them to fetch water from unclean sources.

Led by Yumbe GBV Network (YUGNET), the community monitors approached the district leadership over the matter. The district leadership called for a community

"You may never know what results come of your action, but if you do nothing there will be no result." Mahatma Gandhi

meeting where the management of the Water User Committee was changed. It had previously been run by men and currently it is women who are leading the committee.

The community members testify to improved management of the borehole and they are only charged one fee of UGX 1,000 once a month. The community members have reported that they have now a good working relationship with the Water User Committee.

Roads Sector: Community Workers Demand for Pay

The roads sector, as one of the biggest investment of public funds, is considered to offer significant potential for employment creation. Road transport is the dominant mode of transport and the only form of access to rural communities. Improving road infrastructure is a priority area in the National Development Plan (NDP).

In a move to improve and increase accessibility within Kaabong Town Council, Action Against Hunger (ACF International) started a community initiative to repair the existing roads, build trenches and construct access roads to the different Sub Counties. In January 2012, ACF contracted and hired about 1,000 women headed households in 9 Parishes of Kaabong Town Council. ACF and the workers agreed that cash payments would be made after every cycle (3 months) at a rate of UGX 52,000 per household. However, by November 2012 ACF had not paid the community workers for 3 cycles that had been completed.

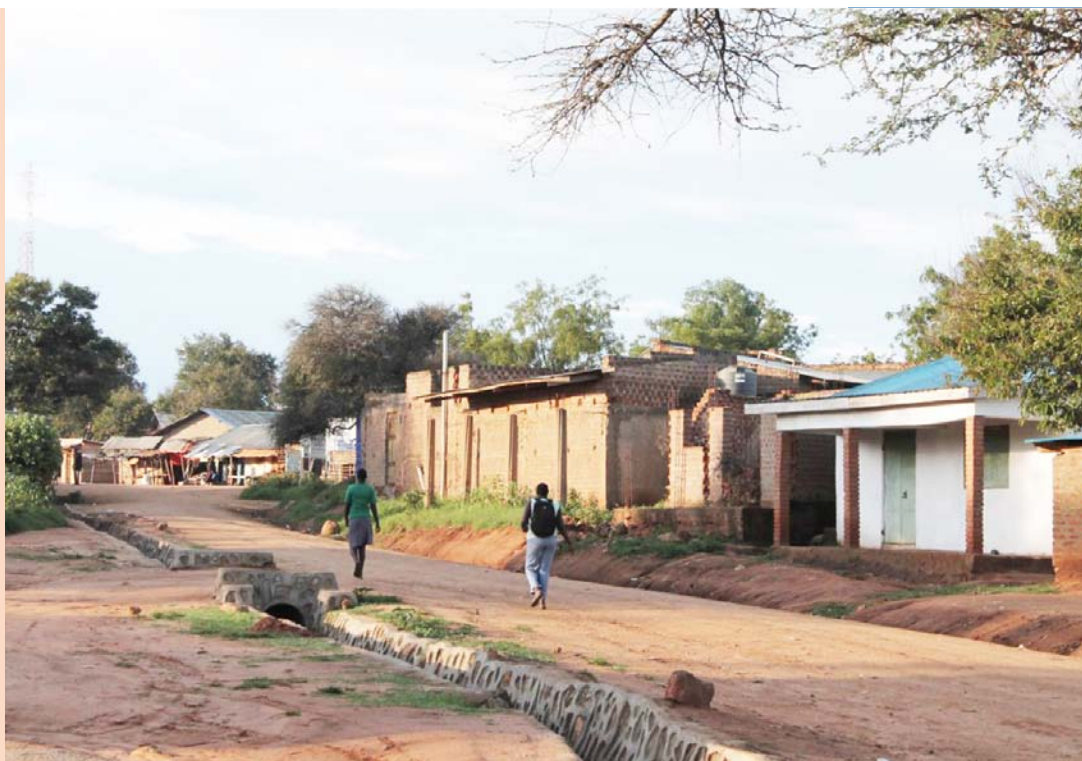
Building on the capacity building and advocacy trainings conducted by UWONET in Kaabong District, the community workers approached the management of ACF to seek payment for the work they had done. To their disappointment, the organization still did not pay them. The community workers led by the women then sought audience with the district leadership to present their grievances and seek their intervention to receive their payment. But the district leadership was slow in responding to their situation.

The community workers led by the women then decided to take to the streets. Armed with their construction tools the community workers marched from the outskirts through Town Council to the



On left; is the road from the Kaabong District Local Government Headquarters leading to the Town Council Centre

*On the
Right are
some of the
trenches in
Kaabong
Town
Coun-cil*



District Local Government Headquarters. The demonstration attracted the Town Council community who joined in to demand for the pay of the community workers.

The district leadership did not take the demonstration lightly and ordered ACF to pay the community workers for all the cycles that they had worked for. On 23rd December 2012 ACF made a payment of 2 cycles to each household and promised to pay off the 3rd cycle at a later date..

Health Sector: Quest for Emergency Referral Services

In the remote rural communities, sick patients and pregnant women have to walk miles to the health centre, or hire cars which are expensive and often unavailable. As a result, patients stay at home and are not tended to by a skilled birth attendant or other healthcare provider. In the recent years, communities have resorted to using motorcycles as ambulances in a bid to make emergency healthcare accessible to those in need. However, the poorer community members still cannot afford to buy the fuel for the motorcycles.

A community led monitoring visit to Adilang Health Centre III revealed that the centre was facing a number of challenges. These included: insufficient staffing, a broken down borehole, inadequate accommodation facilities for the staff and the lack of an ambulance. Consultations with the community members revealed purchase of an ambulance was their priority since the nearest hospital from Adilang is 30kms away.

Led by the Forum for Kalongo Parish Women Association (FOKAPAWA), the community monitors approached the district leadership to seek

*"As citizens,
we all have an
obligation to
intervene and
become involved
– it's the citizen
who changes
things." Jose
Saramago*



*Ambulance
Donated
to Patongo
Health
Centre IV
by USAID /
NUMAT*

redress for the situation in Adilang Sub County. The District Health Officer lobbied for recruitment of staff and this was approved. Agago District has now attracted 56 medical staff who are stationed across the district.

USAID heard of the community's plight for an ambulance and donated a double cabin pick to Patongo Health Centre IV. The District leadership has also allocated UGX 800,000 per quarter for the operation of the ambulance.

The community members in Adilang Sub County testify that the ambulance is helping to save lives of people by reducing on the time it takes to get to the health centre and the hospital in cases of severe complications.

Glaring Differences in Infrastructural Development

Abim District Local Government under the Karamoja Livelihood Improvement Programme (KALIP) commissioned the construction of the Kanu Sub County Police Post and Production House in a move to bring services closer to the people. The construction job was awarded on the same date but to two different contractors.

A community led monitoring visit to the area of construction revealed that the contractor (Lohima Investment Limited) who is constructing the Sub County Production House had abandoned the work. There was a glaring difference in the progress made by the contractor (Tem Gumi Company Limited) who is constructing the Sub County Police Post. The construction work by Tem Gumi was progressing well and was nearly complete.

The community monitors led by Abim Women Together In Development (AWOTID) sought audience with the district leadership to report on the findings in relation to the construction work in Kanu Sub County. The district leadership summoned Lohima Investment Limited and ordered them to finish the construction in a specified period of time.

A follow up community monitoring visit revealed progress in the construction of the Production house. From the foundation a skeleton of the building has now been raised.

The community monitors also noted that the Kanu Police Post had been completed and was now fully operational.

Education Sector: A Back to School Campaign to Increase Enrollment Levels



*Left is the completed Kanu Police Post
Middle is the incomplete Sub County Production House
Right are the Kanu Police Post structures (Police Offices and staff houses)*

At least 50% of the children enrolled in schools in Karamoja sub-region have dropped out before the end of the first academic term. A survey carried out by New Vision indicated a sharp fall in the retention of pupils in the region. Head-teachers in the region attributed the increased dropout to the parents who have left their responsibility to schools. "Our parents do not bother about the presence of their children in school" a teacher from Kaabong District observed.

The rate of school dropout in Karamoja region has reached alarming proportions. Despite the fact that government is promoting education through various programs many children are increasingly



School girls taking part in Co Curricular Activities at a Primary School



dropping out of school. A teacher from Kaabong District noted that most school dropouts he interacts with claim gold mining is a lucrative business, making it hard to convince them to continue with education. The dropout rates are also attributed to the drought affecting Karamoja. During such hard times, children stay at home to look after animals and search for water.

Atasoma Kapilan Bar Women's group (a group nurtured by UWONET) in Kaabong District, organized a mass sensitization campaign code named "Back to School" to encourage children in the district to go back to school. "We need a generation that looks at things differently and we will only get that if they go to school" the group Chairperson noted. The group members organized community sensitization meetings across the district at Parish level to educate parents and children on the importance of education to the development of the region.

Atasoma Kapilan Bar Women's group further targeted girls who had dropped out of school due to a number of different reasons. For example, in 2011 Lotyang Veronica dropped out of school while she attended senior three. Veronica got pregnant and was forced out of school. During the Back to School Campaign Veronica was selected to benefit from support towards her education. The women's group will make a contribution of scholastic material every term to Veronica. Early this year 2013 Veronica returned to school and is progressing well.

Looking Forward

In seeking accountability, there is always the risk of conflict or adversarial attitudes. While implementing the programme, UWONET and her district partners were confronted with situations where genuine political will or buy in was limited. In other cases the public sector actors only paid lip-service to the social accountability approaches and no concrete results were achieved. These challenges are entrenched further by the lack of knowledge,

information and capacity of citizens to participate.

The Social accountability approaches used have led to improvements in government programs and services in the districts of operation. Citizen participation in policy-making and planning processes, for example, have led to the development of programs that better reflect citizen priorities and are better adapted to their needs. Citizen monitoring

has ensured the rational use of resources and provided a safeguard against leakages while citizen evaluation has provided feedback on problems or shortcomings in service delivery and propose collective solutions. One of the key principles of social accountability approaches is to promote constructive approaches that go beyond making accusations or lodging complaints to seeking collective solutions.

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