

## Editorial

### FOOD SECURITY NOW

In our lead story of the month, we try to expound on the efforts of development actors in addressing issues of food security –as the country grapples with issues of increased food prices. In August, members of the Civil Society fraternity converged in Lira to deliberate and strategize on how to increase agricultural production –and enhance commercially viable enterprises among farmers. This, they hoped, would not only help farmers to develop, but would also address the food shortage that has currently engulfed the country.

This further stresses the point of food security in terms of increased production –and the re-introduction of granaries. Government can enforce this through ordinances at the local council levels.

Happy September

Editor  
[jmurungi@krcug.org](mailto:jmurungi@krcug.org)

## FOOD SECURITY TAKES CENTRE STAGE, AS BD PARTNERS MEET IN LIRA



*The Country Representative of BD, Frans Kenis listens to KRC's Sharif Mohammed (centre with jacket) as other partners listen, during the exchange visit in Lira*

*By Mohammed Sharif  
Lira, Northern Uganda*

In August 2011, Civil Society partners from the Rwenzori region, working with Broederlijk Delen (BD) had a learning exchange visit to Lango Sub region. These included; COSIL, Joint Effort to save the Environment, Sustainable Agriculture Trainers Network, CABCS and Kabarole Research & Resource Center which took lead in organizing the learning visit.

The Visit was organized under the auspices of Broederlijk Delen –with interest of having its partners from the Rwenzori learn and exchange ideas with its partners in the Lango sub region

The Rwenzori partners joined their counterparts in Lango for a week long retreat that called, inter alia, for a protracted struggle to help rural farmers increase their production.

*(continued on page 2)*

(from page 1)

These were; Development Training & Research Centre (DETREC), Agency for Sustainable Rural transformation (AFSRT), initiative for community Empowerment (ICES), facilitation for peace & Development (FAPAD), North East Chilli Producers' association (NECPA) and Camkwoki Grass root initiative for development. These organizations, supported by ICCO organized themselves into a cluster of 'Food Security and Nutrition'. The objective of the visit of the Rwenzori region partners was to learn the approaches, the partners in Lango Sub region were using in striking a balance between market-led production and food security.

The explosive visit comes in the wake of recent times when all development actors are aiming at food security. And why food security at this time – and should there be a homogenous approach in addressing the pressing problem in the different regions of Uganda? These and many other questions pre-occupied the participants at the meeting.

Participants realized that, in order to understand the food security situation in Uganda, one should not make conclusions from the general food status of the country, but at specificity brought about by differences in the context, agro-climatic conditions and the available economic options. And for policy, it is the specificity of various parts of the country that is of interest so as to use multiple approaches to design policies and programs according to regions or districts.

Working with their long term partners of Broederlijk Delen, the Rwenzori partners and policy makers are putting a lot of emphasis on supporting and working on issues of food security that is affecting many parts of the region. There are communities that are increasingly becoming 'economically vulnerable'. These include cash crop farmers, orphans, informal sector workers, the elderly and widows. The food crop farmers are faced with seasonal changes and unreliable weather conditions that has proved a particular challenge, since this affects crop



planting and so influenced the timing of seasonal harvesting accelerating food insecurity.

This comes in at the backdrop that over 10 years ago, the Western region was food secure. For example in the seasons of 1998/1998, more households had enough food to feed - and sell commercially –which is not the case currently.

According to the 1999 survey data on food security, crop seasons of the early to late 90s were more productive than the subsequent ones. The recent seasons have not yielded enough food for the households and also for the market even if the prices were attractive to some farmers.

There have been serious concerns that farmers who rely on food crops for income have ended up selling the food because of the attractive prices even the value of the money to buy other commodities dropped due to inflation. This escalated food insecurity at household level.

Owing to this background, the partners who met in Lira agreed to explore opportunities for regional coordination and learn from each other on the approaches of dealing production for the market and food for households. The

partners had a dialogue on the practical definition of food security and its implication to market led production. One interesting thing that partners reflected on is that the concept of food security cannot be standard in all regions of Uganda; it depends on the nature of enterprises households of a given context are involved in, for example most households in Lira are involved in the production of cereals and Cassava which are easy to keep off season as compared to households in the Rwenzori involved in perishable commodities like bananas.

The other key learning was how the Lango farmers have intercropped cash crops like Chilli, Sim sim or soya bean with other food crops like cassava which put the households in a position to earn income from cash crops and reduce temptations to sell food crops.

Participants also observed that households needed to revive traditional methods of food management like 'Enguli';(granaries) integrate cash crop with food crops for incomes with less temptation to sell food crops and promotion of food crops that have a long shelf life or devise appropriate technologies to process and preserve perishable agriculture products

Many factors were cited as possible reasons for this vulnerability to food insecurity. They include; unreliable rainfall patterns; declining soil fertility; pests and diseases; limited land for scaling up production; high food prices; reliance on traditional methods of production such as use of unimproved seeds and animal breeds and use of the hand hoe; and, poor extension services and eliminated cultural practices to food security.

While many of these factors may affect the level of food production, they are not in equal measure, and studies need to be done to determine which of the above factors are more critical than the others. Yet, policy formulation and intervention must be informed by empirical findings that help to prioritize among the many possibilities in order to influence positive results in terms of food security.

# KRC OIL PROJECT TAKES OFF, OFFICERS HEAD FOR LEARNING TOUR IN HOIMA



*A Participant stresses a point as International Alert's Senior Manager Richard Businge (Right) and other partners listen.*

**By: Godfrey Kakande**

At the onset of 2011, KRC and International Alert commenced efforts to provide information and advocacy to communities so as to understand the dynamics involved and how to benefit from the newly discovered oil in the Rwenzori and Bunyoro regions. As part of the processes, the two institutions organized a familiarization tour for their staff, involved in the project. Our staff writer Godfrey Kakande went along, below he recounts the hilarious trip. The prospect of visiting the Bunyoro region came with a lot of anxiety and optimism as to the experience that awaited us. Whenever you talk of Hoima, the mind immediately switches to the oil and gas discoveries there and the attendant wealth associated with them.

Talking my friend Vicky about the impending trip, she was visibly 'envious' that I was about to cross the proverbial poverty cycle to dine and wine with oil sheiks and barons while they remain trapped in poverty. Vicky is not alone. Many a Ugandan have mixed expectations from the newly discovered treasure. The trip was a fact finding mission to gather partial answers –and much more. Travelling in a group of 4 officers, the

mood was the same amongst the vehicle occupants as we bided farewell to those we were leaving behind. Before set off, Chris our pilot teasingly asked each of us if we had jerry-cans to carry oil back to Fort Portal. The same thing that we later learnt had been witnessed when local leaders in Bunyoro were invited for a tour of the oil exploration area many carried containers to fetch oil!

The conversation in the car navigated from politics, economics and the development indicators associated with the discovery of oil and gas in Uganda. We wondered whether such discoveries will transform the lives of the folks that we bypassed on our way.

The road from Fort Portal to Hoima tells of a story of the inequalities in the economic development of the two regions which might partly explain the agitation of the people in Bunyoro region. A tarmac road from Fort Portal town joins a murrum paved road at Kyenjojo to Katooke trading centre and finally fuses into a muddy/ dusty potholed road that leads you to Hoima.

Arguably the road represents the state of other infrastructure between the two points. Comparing the towns of Fort Portal and Hoima would be skewed

as they are on different planets. While the earlier is a clean and orderly place, the latter is a dirty, disorganized town –and with no signs of vibrancy- save for Amakyalya-the sweetest dish served at Endiuro Restaurant!

Back to oil. Bunyoro region has already experienced its fair share of problems arising out of the oil discoveries much of which have been reported in the media. Many questions lingered in my mind as we drove through Kagadi, Pacwa and sauntered through Kabwoya to Hoima –as one cannot fail to see the poverty and hopelessness among the locals and when you talk to them you get both the optimism and frustration. The oil curse appears to be hovering above much of the region and its peoples- given the fact that information pertaining to the progress in the sector is scanty –breeding room for guess work and grapevine.

Some local leaders have not either helped the situation to enlighten the masses as they also feel left out. One such a leader is Mr. Seremosi Mbalimba the C/M LC 3 Butiaba sub county. He had no kind words for both government and Tullow Oil (the company engaged in oil exploration) whom he accuses of seeking to further impoverish and disenfranchise the local people. He says they don't know what

processes are going on as they are not consulted or involved in negotiations and his people in Butiaba have not benefited. Seremosi's view point is supported by a coalition of CSOs that is advocating for keeping the Oil in the Soil until such a time when Uganda is ready for meaningful engagement!

However, in total contrast his counterpart C/Man LC 3 of Buliisa Sub County is excited about the developments in the oil and gas sector especially what Tullow has so far done to develop the area –and quite ironically, they say it has empowered the communities. The local leaders have engaged management of Tullow to negotiate for the 'local content' and so far some few people are able to supply their goods and services under this arrangement.

The challenge is the capacity of the local community to meet the international standards required by Tullow. To address this, Tullow has hired the services of Masindi District Farmers Association (MADFA) in partnership with the Community Development Officer of Buliisa District to build the capacity of those mobilized into groups.

To be fair to Tullow; it has done a lot to support communities. It has constructed schools, equipped some with solar panels and books and is about to complete a modern healthy facility complete with staff quarters for Buliisa sub county among others. The health unit is a partnership between the community, government and Tullow Oil. The community offered the land on which the facility has been constructed a clear manifestation of leadership in Buliisa. When a place has visionary leadership they can negotiate for its people and not to just lament the case of Butiaba and Biiso.

The biggest threat to peaceful development is the lack of information flow from the key players in the oil and gas sector regarding the potential benefits and threats which the community should know. Civil Society organizations are concerned that failure to avail and access information has bred suspicion and mistrust from the community -a recipe for conflict. This was witnessed in Biiso when the community mobilized and demonstrated against Tullow Oil activities in their area.

They blocked all roads and demanded to be compensated for the land they lost after the discovery of oil wells on their land. Their crops had been destroyed leaving them hungry with no food for their families thus confirming the old saying that a hungry man is an angry man. Various coalitions on oil have teamed up to demand that government and oil companies share information concerning their activities to enable all stakeholders engage in meaningful debate and dialogue. Using the available provisions in law; Access to Information Act, Petroleum Act, Oil exploration and Licensing Act among others, it's the right of all Ugandans to access such information that would enable them make informed decisions.

However there are other laws not yet repealed such as the Official Secrets Act 1968 which gags freedom to access information especially that classified as official secrets. We need to repeal these laws if we are to achieve results from the oil sector.

And indeed talking of secrets, activities around the oil exploration area are a guarded top secret. Access is limited and can only be done with permission from the RDC and DISO of the area. Any one intending to visit the area must be vetted lest you sow confusion in the community. This is not bad especially in the wake of terrorism and other security threats to the installations. If not well explained, such sensitivity heightens the suspicion among the players. Unlike in Bunyoro, Rwenzori region is still peaceful with no reported cases of clashes. CNOCC a Chinese firm is in Ntoroko District exploring the prospects for gas deposits. The local leaders have got to mobilize the communities early enough to bargain for the local content from CNOCC. They should organize themselves to improve their capacity to deal with the multinational company. Kabarole Research & Resource Centre (KRC) through its approaches should ignite debate about the opportunities available and mobilize all stakeholders to bargain for the local content.

It was a memorable trip that has not only given me hope in the oil discoveries but also a good lesson that visionary leaders with a development agenda can achieve much for their people and those cheap, self centered leaders are losing out on development.



# KRC RADIO MAGAZINE CHANGES FARMERS' LIVES

By Emmanuel Kajubu

In May 2011, Kabarole Research and Resource Centre started a radio programme on Life F.M radio station aimed at disseminating information to communities on issues affecting them.

The maiden programme started with the maize value chain, which highlighted the various stages the maize crop goes through before it is finally consumed.

Several maize farmers from Rwimi Sub County in Kabarole, Rugendabera in Kasese and Mahyoro in Kamwenge spoke out on how they harvest, store, clean, store and market their produce.

Most interesting to the farmers most was post-harvest handling which has recently impacted on their lives. They were mainly interested in the local technologies that some farmers are engaged in, to solve the problem of storage to avoid losses of their maize produce.

One of the farmers who have managed to invest in post-harvest handling technologies is Charles Amanyire, a maize farmer in Burungu parish in Karambi Sub County.

Amanyire constructed a local maize crib in the compound of his home, where he stores his produce for more than six months. The crib has not only cut down his losses but also reduced his expenditure on storage facilities.

"I was spending more than 300,000 shillings on transport and storage of my maize in Fort Portal town. The locally made crib has helped me reduce on my expenditure," Amanyire said.

Amanyire, reportedly spent 1.2 million shillings to construct the crib.

The temporary structure is 10 feet long supported by thick pieces of wood. It can store 150 sacks of maize. It was built using sticks and covered with iron sheets and it has enough space to allow in enough air. Inside the structure, there is a raised platform where the maize is stacked.

When Amanyire's success story was aired on the programme, several farmers from different districts in the Rwenzori region picked interest and contacted him.

Since then, Amanyire has embarked on teaching the farmers how to locally construct the Maize cribs. So far he has taught maize



*The Maize Crib belonging to Kakundwa maize farmers association*

farmers associations in Bundibugyo and Kyenjojo districts.

Amanyire is happy that he has managed to apply his local technologies and he is confident it will reduce on loss of produce of the farmers. "I did not know that such a programme would bring me fame. I want to thank KRC for initiating the programme because some farmers have been ignorant and even I myself, I didn't know that I was not utilizing my innovation skills," said Samuel Baluku, the Chairperson of Bundibugyo Maize Farmers Association

Samuel Baluku, added that ever since he started listening to the programme, he was inspired by Amanyire's innovation skills and wanted the association to benefit.

Baluku said that the association has been facing difficulties storing their produce and being charged highly by owners of storage facilities in Bundibugyo town.

"Amanyire's story was educative and I am happy he has started teaching the farmers in the association how to construct a local maize crib, we shall often consult him on other issues concerning maize. He has done something that even the district authorities could not think about," Baluku said.

According to Amanyire, he is also currently

teaching farmers in Kyenjojo district.

Apart from Amanyire, some farmers' associations in the district have also constructed maize cribs to store their produce. Kakindwa Maize Farmers Association, in Harugongo parish, Kichwamba Sub County, Kabarole district constructed a maize crib at a cost of 1.5 million shillings. The crib can store over 150 sacks of maize.

George Mwesige, the chairperson of the association says that members contributed money to build the crib. He says in the past, some farmers were storing the produce in their houses for a long time, exposing it to all forms of destructive elements like rodents and moisture.

Mwesige says they can store produce for more than eight months until they find market.

According to a report jointly released by the Food and Agriculture Organization and the World Bank in June, says sub-Saharan Africa is losing as much as 4 billion dollars every year due to post-harvest grain losses.

The report suggests that investing in post-harvest technologies to reduce food losses could significantly increase the food supply in the region.

# Kabambiro and Hapuyo Farmers resolve to maintain their community access roads as community meetings plummet

By Katuutu Rosemary



In the late 80s and early 90s, Village meetings were avenues where all village members mobilized by the Local council chairperson gathered to plan and resolve conflicts and differences among village members. These meetings were very regular, highly attended and respected in the days when graduated tax used to render sleepless nights to men. This tax however, motivated men to work hard, contributed greatly to the financing of the sub county budgets and the lower administrative units like the parish and the villages. It was partly the reason for the success of the village meetings and the functionality of the LC system especially LC1 and 11. During these meetings LCs would provide refreshments locally brewed ('Kwete' and 'Tonto'). This motivated not only the participants but also the LC1 executive committee. These meetings would be financed by the 25% of revenue locally generated from

the Graduated tax, market dues and licenses which was remitted by the sub county to all the Local councils.

With the scrapping off of graduated tax in 2001, men relaxed and rejoiced but the functionality of the LC structures was put to test. I can firmly say that most of these structures are just limping.

The KRC Local Governance Empowerment Programme (LGEP) has since 2008 sensitized and worked with Local council leaders on their roles and responsibilities and key government policies and the planning cycle in order to ensure that village planning meetings are rejuvenated. Some of them have responded more positively and gone beyond holding meetings to guiding farmers to implement actions agreed upon.

In Kabisingo village, Kabambiro Sub County found in Nkoma district, farmers Farmers in Kabisingo 11 village mobilized by the LC1

*Members of a community attending a village meeting*

chairperson following a sensitization on their roles and responsibilities constructed a bridge across river Mpaga. The community members lobbied for funds from their area MP, Hon. Frank Tumwebaze which they used to purchase more timber and other materials like nails. They provided part of the materials and labour for the bridge.

An old lady informed the team that a number of the children would fall in the river on their way to school while others had lost their lives. They also opened an access road connecting the bridge to the nearby community access road which will also be maintained every Wednesday. The road needs culverts and grading, a concern that should be directed to the sub county leadership which should support such a community with a heart and zeal to drive its own development.

# CREATIVITY IN MICRO FINANCE ASSOCIATION (MFA) GROUPS AS VILLAGE SAVINGS INCREASE

By Lawrence Anguzu



*Members of a village SACCO attending a meeting*

One of the cardinal tenets of the Microfinance Association Program at KRC is to empower members of Micro-Finance Associations (MFA) members to plan, manage and own their MFAs and work with others to promote gender sensitive and environmental friendly rural financial activities. I was eager to understand how this objective was being fulfilled down to the grass root level.

Nevertheless my interest was fulfilled partly during the joint meeting in July. A learning visit to some groups in Kyarusoji MFA in Kyenjojo District became a

turning point. It was hard to imagine a group of 90% widows with a good built office compared to some MFAs in the Rwenzori region which are just renting offices on monthly basis. As regards gender gaps in Africa women are burdened with household chores, tend to get low-paying jobs without social protection however the creativity in groups makes them plan, discuss, access technical support and also benefit in other non monetary services. It is important to note that Women's labour force participation is significant, both through productive work and household

maintenance and family care. One point to note is that these women are engaged in subsistence agriculture, self employed in micro income generating activities.

*The Writer is a volunteer in the Micro-Finance Program of KRC*

# Mpaka moves after 12 years at KRC

By John Murungi Amooti

After an illustrious career spanning over 12 years, Jackie Mpaka, one of the longest serving KRC staff has moved to join consultancy and the field of academics. Mpaka, who joined KRC in 2000 as a volunteer, had short stints under Micro Project, Micro Finance, before finally settling at Human Rights & Peace Building Projects. This marked the birth of the volunteers' program at KRC - a scheme that has provided space to over 40 young and fresh graduates from the Universities to practice and test theoretical knowledge and skills in fields of their specialty.

After serving diligently for 2 years, the KRC Board - through competitive interviews at the time of recruitment, Mpaka was made a Program Officer in 2002. This provided her to take leadership of; work management and implementation of the following projects; the Women Rights; Children's Rights; Youth and HIV/AIDS, Youth Peace Building and Conflict Resolution funded by various partners like; HIVOS, BD, UNICEF, GOAL Uganda and Bread for the World. However, technical changes in terms of restructuring continued to take place at KRC with new placements happening.

Jackie was later to become a specialized Capacity Building Program Officer in 2003 -2004 charged with trainings and mentoring of -structures, leaders and professionals. Other new projects like; PRMT and Policy Monitoring funded by DFID in 2005- 2008 came on board due to continued fundraising by KRC, and the young and industrious lady was there to take up the implementation and management role.

KRC being gifted with innovative and resource mobilization approaches towards development, a new product known as Deepening Democracy was funded by DANIDA- HUGGO 2009- 2011. Senior Management again called upon Mpaka to manage and implement the project. Additionally, the officer played similar roles for other short term projects that lasted between three to six months in 2010/2011 like; the Electoral Monitoring;



Citizen Manifesto Initiative and UWEZO- that focused on the Citizens' involvement in the learning of the children funded by National NGO Forum and RWECO.

The time in service with KRC, the officer contributed towards the formation and capacity building of the advocacy and awareness raising structures in Rwenzori region which included; AHURIO, Rwenzori Peace Building Association; Kabarole Inter-School Peace Association, Rwenzori Youth Network to Combat AIDS, Community Based Drama Groups, Human Rights Councilors and CPFs. The structures served and some still serve towards; community mobilization, consciousness raising and Regional cohesion. The experience accumulated and from these structural contributions influences KRC programming, reflections, innovations and fundraising. Other

structures which were revived and strengthened include; District NGO/ CBOs Networks; SMCs and HMCs. It can also be ably said that the work experience and understanding leadership at KRC enabled the officer to realize her ambitions. Mpaka who had hitherto joined the institution with only a diploma in education was later to pursue a bachelors Degree in Social work and Social Administration and a Masters Degree in Public Administration and Management -with all but achieved within the period of 2004 to 2010! Not a mean feat.

To crown the epitome of service delivery pedigree, Jackie Mpaka was voted by fellow KRC staff as the best KRC Radio Presenter, best innovative staff, best staff in terms of service above self and best Project Manager of the year -all coming 2010! Mpaka will definitely be missed at KRC