Lyantonde district is among the many districts in Uganda that still faces the challenge of inadequate classroom blocks, lack of enough desks and inadequate staff quarters. Lyantonde Village Budget Club Members (VBCs) together with Lwamawuggu community members joined hands in putting up two temporary classroom blocks to help their children study from a good environment. The children had been studying under tree sheds which was distracting and stressing during the heavy rains. This challenged the district leaders and in the district budget conference two classroom blocks were allocated to Lwamawuggu primary school FY 2019/2020 and 40 desks were to be given to this school this financial year.

Support to Ibumba primary school

VBCs in Rukungiri also mobilized their own money, bought and donated water harvesting tanks and hand washing facilities to neighboring Ibumba primary school, and also provided free labour to open up a shallow well that would provide constant supply of water when the water harvesting tanks run dry. TV west documented the story and this inspired citizens in other areas to emulate the VBCs.
According to the Uganda National constitution, “….the exercise and enjoyment of rights and freedoms is inseparable from the performance of duties and obligations. Accordingly, it is the constitutional duty of every Ugandan citizen to, among other things;

1. Be patriotic and loyal to Uganda and promote its well-being
2. Engage in gainful work for the good of that citizen, their family and the common good, and to contribute to national development
3. Contribute to the well-being of the community where that citizen lives ….”

This message seems to have sunk deeper in the minds of the members of Kishonga Village Budget Club (VBC), in Buyanja Sub County as well as their counterparts in Nyakagyeme sub county (Kigaaga VBC), Rukungiri district. Following the formation and subsequent training of these VBCs in Gender Responsive Budgeting and Service Delivery tracking (with support from Ford foundation), they soon realized that they had collective and individual roles to play in nation building. Monitoring visits in schools and health centers in their respective sub counties exposed them to the glaring gaps in service delivery that needed urgent action. Notable among the gaps in schools were lack of emergency sanitary pads for menstruating girls, lack of (decent) changing rooms for menstruating girls, poor academic performance, inadequate clean water, lack of hand washing facilities, and lack of adequate (separate) latrines for girls especially at Kishonga primary school, in Buyanja Sub County.

Kishonga VBC successfully lobbied for a girls latrine and modern changing rooms. Appalled by the pathetic situation at Kishonga primary school, members of Kishonga VBC used the interface meetings with duty bearers organized by FOWODE to consistently demand for a separate girls’ latrine and changing room for menstruating girls. In addition to constantly engaging area district councilors, the VBCs ensured that this issue also featured prominently in the position paper that they jointly developed with FOWODE’s sister CSOs in Rukungiri district and presented during the district budget consultative conference of 2017. As a result, a modern 5-stance girls’ latrine and a (2-roomed) changing room were constructed at the school. The latrine is strategically located and fitted with handles for easy access and use by girls with disabilities, whilst the changing room has innovations, such as water supply, that is collected (using quality gutters) into a 500 litre water harvesting tank, which ensures constant supply of water for the menstruating girls. It also has an improvised eco-sun toilet that uses saw-dust instead of flashing water, which makes it usable even when there is no water.

Still in Rukungiri, the VBCs successfully lobbied for Shs. 69,000,000/= from Uganda Road Fund for construction of the road that stretches through Rubanga parish, so that the schools and health centers could be easily accessible. The district provided the road equipment and graders so that this fund would be used for fuel and allowances for the drivers. Construction is already on-going and the entire community is all full of praises for the VBCs.

In the picture on the right: Head teacher Kishonga Primary School (Mr.Andrew Mugarura- Right) taking some of the VBC members monitoring progress of the road construction.

THE ROAD FUND

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Inspired by the change created by their counterparts in Buyanja sub county, members of Kigaaga VBC in Nyakagyeme sub county decided to lobby the leadership of Buchenche Church of Uganda who allowed them to organize thanksgiving services, proceeds from which were used to buy emergency sanitary pads for girls at the school and the balance used to buy liquid soap and hand washing facilities for pupils after using the latrines. They further constructed separate urinals for male pupils and teachers.

Most importantly, the VBC members mobilized their own money and bought sets of exams for all the students of Buchenche primary school. As the P7 candidates got closer to their PLE examinations, they bought them more exams and provided free mathematical sets and pens for all the candidates and had inspirational talks with them to build their confidence ahead of the PLE. All parents and the community around Nyakagyeme Sub County are optimistic that the school will register very good grades in the 2018 PLE. This amazing story did the rounds on TV West and local radio stations which awakened the rest of the community members to support VBC efforts and get up in arms against poor service delivery.

Wakiso district planner Galabuzi Paddy responds to the VBC proposals that they submitted to be handled in the financial year 2019/2020. The meeting was held at Kakiri gardens in Kakiri where he informed the VBCs that he has mobilised resources to renovate Namagera primary school, Kitayita Chance school and support to Malangaata primary school following their advocacy work as seen in the reports presented to him.
**MASINDI: IMPROVING SANITATION AT ISIMBA PRIMARY SCHOOL.**

The improvement in sanitation and hygiene at Isimba primary school, Bwijanga sub county

**Before**

For a period of 7 years the school has not had water because the tank was damaged by the community members and the borehole was spoilt too by the same community members who refused to contribute money for maintaining it. Pupils especially the girls were greatly affected especially during their menstrual cycle therefore some had opted to remain home during that time of the month. The water source was 5 miles from the school. Pupils were not packing food because there was no water at school therefore they opted to stay hungry during school days which in the long run affected their learning.

**After**

In the dialogue meeting the community disclosed that "...as parents of pupils in the school, we were told to contribute some money for repairing the bore hole which some of us did. However, up to now nothing has been done"

The head teacher Madam Natukunda, in her response said that repairing the borehole requires 900,000/= and so far she had only 60,000/= that the community had contributed.

In the interface meeting, the head teacher committed herself to follow up at the District through the District Education Officer who responded positively and the borehole was repaired by Masindi District local Government. The money the community contributed was used to top up the payment to the technician.

We are glad to report that this year in the month of July 2018, the borehole was repaired and it has contributed to an increase in the enrolment of the learners from 342 last year to 550 as per second term. Girls now have water to use during their menstruation unlike before when they would miss classes and opt to stay home until they finished their cycle. Pupils now pack food because they now have water at the school for washing their hands and the containers. This has immensely improved the hygiene and sanitation of the pupils and other school facilities like the latrines and classrooms.
WAKISO DISTRICT RESPONDS TO GENDER BUDGETING IN SUPPORT OF 214 GIRLS

Wakiso district has responded to Gender and equity prioritization of issues in the budgeting process with specific emphasis in the areas of Education and Health.

This was done following the VBC monitoring of the schools. The VBCs found that there was a school in Kakiri which had over 214 girls enrolment. After this they organised a community dialogue in which the head teacher was involved and confirmed that his outcry was the girls sanitation in the school. The VBCs noted that the school needed a gender sensitive toilet an issue which they raised during an earlier meeting before the sub county chief accountant and the chairperson LCIII. As a result, a commitment was made to support the school with support from SAVE a partner NGO. Toilets were constructed in 2018 [see Picture (Right)].

According to the BMAU/UNICEF POLICY BRIEF NO. 4/15 on Understanding Social Barriers to Primary Education, pervasive teacher absenteeism is one of the main hindrances to the effective delivery of basic education services in Wakiso. Common interventions made by Village Budget Club Members of Namayumba challenged the value of “sending a child to school only to be taught by teaching assistants who are drop outs.”

During the community dialogue held at Malangaata, parents also highlighted a real challenge in reducing teacher absenteeism. They sighted that the provision of teacher’s quarters in rural schools in Wakiso which is one of the best performing schools in Uganda helps students perform better because of teachers commitments not because children are wise. A teacher teaching Namagera primary school moves 10 kilometers daily from Kakiri leaving her salary with the bodabodas.
Local leaders in Busia district have been urged to allay fears held by society regarding the roles played by men and women. “Many of these roles are based on mindset and this can be changed,” said Beth Mwebaze a facilitator with Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE). She was speaking at the gender mainstreaming and women's rights workshop for district and sub county councilors held at Rand hotel in Busia town.

Similar trainings were held in Butaleja and Namayingo districts where the “Women and Youth Empowerment for Leadership and Women's Rights project is being implemented in the district’s sub counties of Buyanga, Masinya, Nawajonfu, Butaleja town council, Mutumba and Namayingo town council.

Another facilitator, Salume Ofwono appealed to the local leaders to mainstream gender issues in their work plans at local government level. “Come up with strategies that address both women and men issues and integrate them in the designed activities to be implemented by your local councils,” Ofwono said.

She said, activities which were not planned for, cannot be implemented, noting this will result into the electorate who mainly rely on politicians for service delivery to start complaining. Ofwono told the councilors that gender mainstreaming should be done at institutional, departmental and family levels, where needs assessment is carried out planning.

Councilor Wandera Ondula, the Masaba sub county representative at the district said, blanket planning should be avoided and focus on keen eye-to-eye and case-to-case planning.

Gorrete Nangwanga, the district female youth councilor said, there should be political will in resource allocation adding that women’s decision making should be increased. The acting district speaker Betty Ajambo said, without gender mainstreaming, categories of people like youths, women and the elderly lag behind in development because of being left out in planning. Florence reminded the councilors to put service delivery above politics saying, the people they represent are more interested in service than politics. She encouraged the councilors to pursue further education, read a lot, and do research so as to keep abreast with the current developments in the country. She said the knowledge acquired in addition to good communication skills will help them to ably deliberate in their councils.

Geoffrey Ojime the Buteba sub country councilor who stood in for the acting district chairperson Paul Oguttu, commended FOWODE for constantly training and equipping district leaders with knowledge which he said, has greatly improved the quality of debate. He appealed for more trainings particularly for sub county leaders without being based on areas FOWODE operates.

In Butaleja the Chief Administrative Officer commended FOWODE for the timely training of local councilors on gender mainstreaming since the planning and budgeting processes are ongoing for the FY 2019/2020. He encouraged the councilors to make use of the knowledge and skills acquired to advocate for gender responsive budgets across board, and committed to support the councilors to make the 2019/2020 budget gender sensitive. “Leaders are policy makers and they should chose to embrace gender mainstreaming in the district budgets,” said the Chief Administrative Officer Butaleja District.

He further urged the leaders to ensure that the historical imbalances that existed in the district between men and women are addressed. He stressed that people suffering from such imbalances are in the communities and therefore partners and leaders should reach out to them.

In his Remarks the Chief Administrative Officer Butaleja noted that the District has unique and strong attachment to religion and therefore such trainings should also target faith based organizations to have them appreciate and understand the concept of gender.