

Rural Initiative for Community Empowerment – West Nile (RICE-WN)

**“Bringing Uganda’s oil to the surface, increasing
community capacity to handle oil resource effectively”**

(Contract No: 0131_RICE-WN)

<< 2014/2015, July-September 2014 >>

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Basic Project Information









Profile	
Name of project	Bringing Uganda's oil to the surface, increasing community capacity to handle oil resource effectively
Project goal and objectives	<p>Goal</p> <p>To build an empowered community that has a voice in oil governance and accountability.</p> <p>Objectives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. To empower communities and their leaders on oil accountability tracking by the end of 2016 ii. To facilitate information dissemination to all stakeholders for knowledge and conflict prevention in the oil rich areas by the end of 2016 iii. To enable communities to exploit local business opportunities brought by oil exploration by the end of 2016 iv. To strengthen local community participation in policy implementation, security, law enforcement and policy reform related to oil and gas by the end of 2016
Location of the project	Arua, Nebbi, Buliisa and Nwoya
Geographical coverage	Arua, Nebbi, Buliisa and Nwoya
Contract start date	1 st December 2013
Contract end date	30 th June 2016

Progress

Project output/ Expected result 1	Planned activity	Status of implementation	Reason for variance (if any)
Output 1.1: 200 local leaders trained on environmental management.	Activity 1.1.1: Training of local leaders and communities on environmental management	<p>This activity was successfully implemented in the four districts of Nwoya, Arua, Buliisa and Nebbi.</p> <p>The theme for these trainings was “towards inclusive environmental management”.</p> <p>The objectives of the trainings included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ Enable participants understand how environmental concerns are handled at national level and take our part e.g Environmental Impact Assessments (EIAs) ☑ Deepen understanding of environment, gender and oil matters among the leaders. ☑ Increase the attention paid by the local leaders to addressing community environmental concerns. <p>Training Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☑ A total of 228 local leaders (70 female and 158 male) were trained environmental management. Additional number of 28 leaders participated in the trainings other than the invited number due to the interest 	








		<p>in learning issues of environment affecting people in the region.</p> <p> District specific action plans were drawn by leaders to act on community environmental concerns.</p> <p>Female leaders actively participated in discussing environmental concerns affecting the women in the Albertine Graben.</p>	
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Challenges

-  There is still knowledge gap among leaders in issues of environment thus many environment related concerns are left untouched yet it is affecting the people. A case in point is the issue of charcoal burning in the districts, sand mining, “marum” excavation, among others.
-  Some leaders utilized this platform to point fingers at each other as regards roles and responsibilities in addressing community environmental concerns thus delaying discussions.
-  Unexpected influx of leaders not invited affected the budget leading to spending more than planned. This was attributed to the interest to learn more about their environment.
-  Delays in soliciting for the facilitators affected early implementation of the activities. Being a technical topic on environment this was meant to be handled by NEMA but due to busy schedules on their side, activities delayed till the last weeks of the quarter
-  The number of women debating environmental, gender and oil and gas issues is still low. Even after inviting a number of women in the training only few turned up.
-  The leaders expressed concern of inadequate capacity of environment appointees at the sub county level to handle environment related issues. Most sub counties have social workers appointed as Community Development Officers (CDO) who are to champion environmental issues at the sub county level but no training provided for them yet they are expected to deliver.
-  None functional environment committees at district, Sub County, parish and villages levels which affects enforcement of the laws related to environment. All the work is left to the environment officer even though concerns on environment cannot be handled single handedly.
-  Many local leaders and communities have not fully understood the laws related to

environmental protection thus failure to implement these laws effectively. This is coupled with the poor reading culture among leaders and communities affecting knowledge on these issues

Recommendations

-  The LCV Chairperson of Nwoya district (Mr. Okello Patrick Oryema) recommended Environmental laws be translated into the local languages for easy understanding by the community at the grass root and their leaders. In addition he urged NEMA and other relevant authorities to produce more copies of the environmental laws since the copies are not enough in the district and sub county offices.
-  The sub county chief of Anyiribu Sub County, Arua District recommended that NEMA should set aside some funds to train the environment appointees at sub county level to equip them with some knowledge on some basic technical skills on handling environment issues. She said the local revenues collected at the sub county are little and cannot be enough to train these people.
-  There is need to set yet another strategy to engage women at all sectors in debating issues of gender, oil and environment. This can be through creating a specific platform for women to discuss issues of environment, oil and gender.
-  NEMA needs to build the capacity of all environment officers to handle oil and environment issues at district level saving the burden of waiting for them to conduct trainings at district level.
-  Rev. Titus Acidri recommended that RICE-WN with her partners should specifically organize some training for religious and cultural leaders who seem to have the biggest community high and lower levels to handle environmental issues. The sub county chief of Pakwach added that religious leaders are the at the fore front to create change thus they should start preaching environmental protection strategies in churches and mosques as they call upon people to prepare for the coming of Jesus or Muhammad.
-  “There are no funds to train the committees and appointees at sub county level to handle environment concerns thus need to integrate environment issues in our day to day activities” says Mr. Andiandu Joakim, District Environment Officer Arua District.
-  Mrs. Nsereko Patience from NEMA urged the participants to be vigilant as regards environmental issues, and in case of any challenging environmental concerns. She emphasized that the District Environment Officer is the technical person they can easily run to so that they are helped immediately other than waiting for such interventions.

- ☒ The LCV of Buliisa District Hon. Lukumu Fred recommended that NEMA should decentralize and build capacities of their agents on ground so that a common man can have access to their services. He said NEMA is still thin on ground thus need to them to spread out despite a regional office being set up in Masindi district.
- ☒ The DCDO Nwoya recommended that the district technical planning committee needs to design a comprehensive gender sensitive engagement plan to handle gender issues in relation to oil and gas and environment.

Project output/ expected result 2	Planned activity	Status of implementation	Reason for variance (if any)
Output 2.2: 270 Gender Advocacy Group members selected and trained.	Activity 1.2: Conduct Training for Gender Advocacy Groups	<p>GAGs were trained in four sub counties: Alwi in Nebbi, Okollo in Arua, Kigwera in Buliisa and Purongo in Nwoya.</p> <p>The GAGs were selected based on their willingness and ability to voluntarily advocate for better change in their communities</p> <p>Training Outputs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☒ A total of 120 Gender Advocacy Group members (89 female and 31 male) were selected and trained in the four districts. 30 gender advocacy group members were trained in each of the four sub counties. ☒ The GAGs came up with action plans to first start with meetings so as to elect their leaders ☒ 75% of the GAGs are women 	The actual number of GAGs to be trained was 270 but due to time constraint to handle all the nine sub counties, the training for the remaining 150 GAGs in other sub counties has been pushed to quarter two since it is done at sub county level

		and 25% male selected per parish in all the four districts.	
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Challenges

- ☒ Some of the GAG members took this chance as a job opportunity to receive pay; this created high expectations among the GAG members during the training.
- ☒ Some local leaders did not fully understand the selection criteria which led to picking mix ups of selecting equal numbers of women and men in the sub county.
- ☒ There is still laxity among women to take up leadership roles; they feel inferior when it comes to gender issues and standing for their rights.

Recommendations

- ☒ The ED RICE-WN considered explaining the importance of the training of GAGs to the participants. This changed attitude of most of the participants who at the end of the training were able to make practical actions to take.
- ☒ There is need to educate the local leaders on supporting these GAGs to undertake their roles in communities. This includes supporting them during sensitizations and advocacy drives.
- ☒ The LCIII of Alwi Mrs. Proscovia urged the GAGs to take up this training seriously because they were considered as the best to champion issues of gender and advocate for them. She told the participants that it all starts with volunteering to see a change in yourself and later your community. She urged participants to be vigilant and pledged support for the group where need be.
- ☒ The Sub county chief of Purongo urged women to take this opportunity seriously; she said this program is designed to see women advocates who can champion their issues to the higher level and/or address them at their own level. She urged the women not to be shy to take up this opportunity which has not involved many of them and to work harder.

Project output/expected result 3	Planned activity	Status of implementation	Reason for variance (if any)
Output 3: 30 volunteers facilitated.	Activity 3.1: Facilitating volunteers to use telephones	A total of 30 volunteers received stipend for the quarter. The volunteers were all paid for the three months worked	

Challenges			
 Some of the volunteers still have challenges with capturing real issues in the communities			
Recommendations			
 Need to conduct a volunteer refresher training to help volunteers fully understand what information to collect			
Project output/ expected result 4	Planned activity	Status of implementation	Reason for variance (if any)
Output 4: Daily newspapers purchased to track oil and gas information	Activity 4.1: Purchase daily newspapers to track oil and gas information	Newspapers (New Vision and Daily Monitor) have been purchased to track oil and gas information.	
Project output/ expected result 5	Planned activity	Status of implementation	Reason for variance (if any)
Output 5: 300 copies of newsletters developed and disseminated	Develop and disseminate newsletters with community voices on oil transparency and accountability	This activity was not implemented within the reporting	Late commencement of activities delayed capturing of the community voices.

Report on gender mainstreaming (how has the organization integrated gender in the reporting period?)

From previous engagements, it was discovered that local leaders had inadequate knowledge on gender issues. Therefore, this Quarter, RICE-WN embarked on building capacity of the stakeholders on gender issues. Gender related topics were covered during the trainings conducted.

Furthermore, during mobilization for activities, specific slots were allocated to cater for women and other interest groups who were seen to shy away from such activities.

Emerging issues, Risks and Mitigation

The DPC Nebbi was impressed to announce that the police now has a directorate of oil and gas at national level, and environmental police to handle issues of environment. He said the role of the police is not only to arrest criminals but also to protect the environment, people and other property. He said he is pleased that RICE-WN does not always leave out the security unit in all her activities which keeps them informed and learn a lot from such trainings.

The District Environment Officer of Arua, Mr. Andiandu Joakim also took pleasure to announce that Arua district now has a new compensation rate which has been approved and is currently operational. The chairman land board Arua District added that the Arua compensation rates are being used at the national level as model rates for other districts.

The NEMA representative Mrs. Patience Nsereko communicated to leaders that the authority has now dedicated four days in a year for environmental protection these include women's days, National Environment days, National Youth Days, etc. A number of activities are undertaken on these days which among others include tree planting, distribution of IEC materials on environmental protection, trainings among others.

Influx of animals especially elephants is still alarming in Purongo sub county; the leaders said acres of rice have been destroyed by these animals and they are foreseeing poverty in the area due to this destruction. People are displaced from their homes and left in misery without cultivating.

The DCDO, Mr. Geoffrey Akena said there are cases of child prostitution reported from Purongo Sub County resulting from the need for money by young girls and boys, increase population in the area. This cry has been raised by some community members although the statistics of children involved in this act have not been established. He urged the leaders of Purongo Sub County to be vigilant to find out facts and number of children involved. In addition he asked the leaders to conduct sensitizations at lower levels to address this issue.

There is a high school dropout rate among young girls; the statistics at Purongo district indicates that only 43% of girls complete primary seven in the area. The DCDO said that in Kochigoma Sub-county, only two girls are likely to sit for the UACE and it is possible that only one girl will sit next year because the number of girls in the secondary school is few yet many have gotten married at an early age.

The chairperson for production and natural resources Arua District Local government Mr. Atibuni John said the residents of Ajia sub-county have raised concerns about the construction of factories (tobacco processing) in the area. Environmental Impact Assessment was conducted however, they fear that they will be affected since consultation of the leaders was not done.

Issues of water resource management were raised by leaders of Arua. They said car washing in the river Enyau contaminates the river yet some sub counties also rely on these rivers for livelihood thus urged the environment officer to assess this practice and make recommendations on what the district should do. There is need to protect these rivers because direct car washing in the river may lead to many negative impacts.

An issue of sand mining and murrum excavation by the local people for survival is alarming. This affects the environment grossly. Yet EIAs are not conducted for such practices; Participants wondered what the leaders can do to divert the minds of these people to do better business other than such acts.

The vice LCV Chairman Nwoya, Hon. Ocitti Tom Oryem questioned the District Environment Officer to account to leaders on the 3000 seedlings donated to Nwoya district by NFA. He asked where these have been placed since his sub county doesn't have any information about it. The District Environment Officer, Ms. Eveline, however clarified that the seedlings were not delivered to the district since all the seedlings were collected by some politicians.

The LCIII chairperson of Pakwach raised a concern on issues of forest reserves that are being destroyed by communities; he said it is high time the district looked at employing forest rangers to protect these forests; the Speaker Alwi sub county added that communities have even adopted a term "defilement trees" for the young trees they are cutting. They say protecting the environment should wait because they also want to survive. The District Forest Officer, Nebbi District cited low funding and a few number of personnel as the major challenges facing the forestry department.

Noise pollution in the four districts is still an issue; the leaders expressed that disco halls at community level are also environmental concerns.

The LCIII chairman of Buliisa sub county Hon. Kubalirwa Nkuba questioned the mandate of NEMA in handling environment issues; he said people are now running to court with issues of

environment which would rather be handled by NEMA. The LCV chairman Nwoya Hon. Okello Patrick Oryema also said that the district has filed a case in court against Total E&P for the waste dumped in Olwoch's compound in Pabit Parish, Purongo Sub-county. He said this has been a long awaited time for action. A response from NEMA representative Mrs. Nsereko Patience on the waste was that the government through the authority has contracted a company to manage all oil waste and currently this company is constructing a waste management plant in Hoima thus the waste in Olwoch's garden is a priority to be removed and taken to that plant. She declined to comment further on the matter since it was already in the court.

Leaders expressed lack of consultation on issues of EIAs in their region; Leaders of Arua said the case of the lagoon for the hospital became alarming when it was badly needed yet an EIA was conducted and they were not consulted; In addition, the leaders complained that NEMA delays to circulate the EIAs to the districts yet these reports are not also given to sub counties yet most of the activities are conducted at sub county level.

Lessons learnt

Involvement of all categories of leaders; political, religious, technocrats, youth, cultural, security and women in trainings builds capacities of all sectors and thus helps leaders to build synergies in handling matters affecting the local community.

Picking few men to advocate and champion matters affecting women helps to change the traditional attitudes of men and women; the 25% representation of men in the GAGs training helped to bring out real issues affecting women in families thus Mr. Manye Yokisan Volunteer of Kigwera sub county, said he will share this information with his colleagues during the social joints at the trading center to make a change in their own families.

The local leaders are not implementing the regulations governing environmental management at district level as a result of limited capacity in terms of finances and technical human resources.

Way forward

The District Coordinator for tree talk, Ms. Lanyero Pauline from Straight Talk, Nwoya Branch promised to give tree seedlings to the leaders for planting for as long as they will be in position to show her the piece of land where the tree seedlings shall be planted, since tree planting is one of the ways of promoting environmental conservation.

All the Gender Advocacy Groups set action plans of holding their first planning meeting and starting their work. Nebbi group dedicated 2nd Oct and it has been reported that this group held their meeting and elected leaders to start advocacy issues, Arua group dedicated 4th Oct 2014, Buliisa on 23rd and Nwoya on 18th October.

Case stories

Religious leaders are at the fore front of creating awareness on environment;

The leaders training in the four districts of Arua, Nebbi, Nwoya and Buliisa saw various ways leaders could create change in their own communities free of charge. The sub county chief of Pakwach expressed that religious leaders are the at the fore front to create change thus they should start preaching environmental protection strategies in churches and mosques as they call upon people to prepare for the coming of Jesus or Muhammad. According to him religious leaders have the majority of the community members they meet weekly or even daily. Preaching environmental protection to communities every Fridays or Sundays would be a great deal. He further said Islam and Christian days such as Month of Ramadhan in Islam, Lent and Advent periods in Christianity could be dedicated to environmental protection among Christians and Moslems to voluntarily take charge of their environment. This idea humbled the religious leaders and they asked for technical training in handling environmental concerns and copies of the environment laws availed to churches and mosques for better understanding. Rev. Titus Acidri testified that indeed this training was worth attending given the content received on environmental management in the broader picture.

Ours is now the end of the world

The GAGs training brought about debates when members were asked to identify advocacy issues in their region. Mr. Egima Hannington, a participant during the training said “ours in Okollo is now the end of the world. Charcoal burning has become the only source of livelihood in the area and all the trees have been cut to this effect. He expressed that when you tell people in my village not to cut trees reserved for environmental protection, you become the worst enemy in the area, when you ask them to cut one and plant they ask you for the seeds. Many big trucks now buy charcoal from the grass roots and people concentrate on charcoal burning more than agricultures, very day the trees are becoming few and the place is drying up he bitterly expressed. The issue of charcoal burning in all the four districts was one advocacy issue the

GAGs wished to address in their communities; they requested RICE-WN to support them in getting tree seedlings to restore their environment because desertification is foreseen in the region due to these practices.

We must be exemplary – Chairman LCV Nebbi tells leaders

The LCV chairman Nebbi district, Hon. Okumu Robert urged leaders to leave exemplary lives if communities are to embrace environmental protection. He said the negative attitude of the youth in protecting the environment needs attention of their leaders. “I had given out some tree seedlings of mango to some youth but one of them asked me when he would benefit from this mango meaning the youths are not mindful of the future generation yet they are the upcoming leaders of this country”, Hon. Okumu testified. He further shared his own experience that leaving by example is the best thing a leader can offer his subjects. “I have planted over 3 acres of trees and coffee which I can benefit from even after my leadership role”, Hon. Okumu Robert stated.

ACTIVITY PHOTOS



Picture 1: Speaker Nebbi DLG chairing a Plenary Session during the Local Leaders Training in Nebbi



Picture 2: DISO Buliisa raising a concern during the Buliisa Local Leaders Training



Picture 3: A religious leader during the training in Buliisa raising environment concerns during



Picture 4: LC V Chairman Nwoya addressing the Participants as the RDC (seated) listens



Picture 5: Some participants during training of Gender Advocacy Group members in Buliisa



Picture 6: Sub County leaders during sub county action planning



Picture 7: Resident District Commissioner Arua, Mr. Peter Debele opening the Local Leaders Training



Picture 8: Mrs. Patience Nsereko (from NEMA) responding to Queries in Buliisa District



Picture 9: NEMA official, Mrs. Patience Nsereko responding to environmental concerns in Nwoya district