



PELUM UGANDA

Networking for a Greener Africa

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Quarterly Newsletter by Participatory Ecological Land Use Management, Uganda

Members' Testimonies of PELUM work in 2010



In this Issue

AFIRD, SACU, Caritas Kabale, and RUCID share the benefits gained from participating in PELUM Uganda activities



The farmer entrepreneurship sharing event enhanced information sharing between PELUM Uganda, the private sector, and other stakeholders



The year 2010 was filled with many opportunities, milestones and of course challenges. From the country desk to the member organisations and partners, many efforts were put into improving livelihoods of small-scale farmers. Trainings were conducted in policy analysis and advocacy, seed security, farmer entrepreneurship and land. Exchange visits were organised for members on farmer entrepreneurship and advocacy. Many events were organised and attended all aimed at acquiring knowledge and networking for the sake of working towards a safe and healthy environment for the small-scale farmer.

At the organisational level, 2 staff joined the team at the country desk. Richard Mugisha as the Campaign Advocacy and Lobby Officer and Doreen Nanyonga as the Communication and Information Officer. This development means more efficiency at the Country Desk. A new website was setup, staff received email addresses with the domain @pelumuganda.org, sessions were conducted for staff in HIV/AIDs, a radio program was started with the aim of disseminating market information to farmers so as to increase their bargaining power.

Thematic committees were so proactive. The Sustainable Agriculture thematic committee in particular wrote and presented a position paper to the Plan for Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA) Secretariat.

A lot was achieved. In this issue therefore, we present testimonies from some of the member organisations on what they benefited from being part of the network. When members see and feel the benefits of PELUM Uganda then are they able to pass.

Editorial Team

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Trainings, exchange visits, mentee project: AFIRD has attended them all and put them to good use!

Agency for Integrated Rural Development (AFIRD) aims to increase farmer households' income by 50% by 2014 in the operational area. AFIRD works within 3 strategic areas which include;

1. Agricultural production and environment
2. Access to markets
3. Human rights

In 2010 our staff members were supported by PELUM which resulted into a number of benefits.

Mr. Musisi Sulaiti attended a farmer entrepreneurship workshop and later an exchange visit where he learnt about farming as a business. He was able to share with other staff members during staff meetings. As a result, trainings and extensions were modified towards farming as a business. He also trained other staff in development of a business plan and facilitated one for Nzu women group where farmers are in a business of passion fruit processing and Apiary. This group has been able to process and pack juice and honey.

A second group supported is Kyengeza Farmers group which has gone into plantain production (Gonja) as a business in order to reap from the nearby market where it is demanded in high quantities.

Another staff member- Lydia Kagoya, was taken up for mentorship in advocacy at Action for Development (ACFODE) with facilitation from PELUM Uganda. In her words, Lydia says that before she went for mentorship at ACFODE, she used to look at advocacy only in definition terms. However, she was able to learn roles, steps and the challenges faced in advocacy.

After her mentorship at ACFODE, she was able to participate in a project intended to increase involvement of local communities in planning, monitoring and budgeting in Masulita subcounty where she participated as a trainer. In addition, she participated in reprimanding a lady in AFIRD's neighborhood who had mistreated her step daughter by cutting her feet with a razor blade because the child had eaten food at a neighbor's home. Consequently, this lady was sentenced to three months in Jail and the story appeared in Bukedde; a local newspaper.

Lydia's involvement with ACFODE has also opened doors for cooperation between AFIRD and ACFODE. So far two meetings have been held where avenues for further networking have been explored. We hope to further strengthen our Advocacy strategies.

AFIRD was also assigned by PELUM to work with 104.9



AFIRD's Executive Director, Mr. Eustace Ssajabi (center) receives a certificate from the Country Board Chairperson (witnessed by other Country Board members) for his full participation in 2010 PELUM activities

Suubi FM in monitoring and dissemination of market information to farmers in Central Uganda. This market information is from major markets in Uganda and is provided by Farmgain Africa. In order to enrich this information for the farmers in AFIRD's operational area, we have established a section which collects information from the Kakiri market on bananas, cassava and indigenous vegetables. This has enabled us to learn about the relationship between the supply of foodstuff and vegetables and the variation in prices over time. On the farmers' side, they are now able to make decisions on where to sell and at what price given the prevailing conditions.

We are very grateful for the support which PELUM has offered AFIRD and are looking forward for greater things in 2011.

The Agency for Integrated Rural Development (AFIRD) is an NGO whose vision is; a self sufficient society, free from poverty and human suffering while her mission is; to improve the livelihood of vulnerable groups in the community through capacity building on sustainable agriculture and natural resources management.



PELUM Uganda's Campaign Advocacy and Lobby Officer being interviewed by a Uganda Broadcasting Council Journalist during the World Food day celebrations in Mukono district

Experiences from the Advocacy exchange visit program

"I on behalf of Send a Cow Uganda- am grateful to PELUM for identifying CDRN as a mentor organization and we are particularly grateful to CDRN for all the cordial support they offered me while with them," Judith Ikiring-SACU

Participating in the 2010 advocacy exchange mentorship programme was quite an interesting learning time. Among the things I encountered during the advocacy exchange visit included;

A friendly working atmosphere: all the staff at CDRN were so friendly and receptive making me feel at home.

The dialogue meetings we held in Karamoja and Masindi districts were quiet interesting. I had an opportunity to learn *real* advocacy- the practical and not just the theoretical bit we learnt in class. These advocacy activities focused on empowering people to demand for their rights by confronting powerlessness and social injustices to enable them fulfill their responsibilities and claim their rights from different duty bearers. This was done by use of Public Expenditure Trucking (PETS) and dialogues.

While in Karamoja and in other parts of the country, I learnt new cultures, behaviors and the fact that people are capable of confronting powerlessness and demand for their rights. Doing so brings development to their areas and enables them to appreciate and understand the importance and use of the Public Expenditure Trucking system. To my advantage, I knew Swahili commonly spoken in Karamoja and the relationship in words between my mother tongue

Ateso and Akaramojong- made it easy for me to learn and connect with the participants

Lessons learnt during the exchange mentorship visit

- All stakeholders should be given an opportunity to participate in any advocacy event. In Karamoja & Masindi, different stake holders were invited to the dialogue meeting to share findings of the report. The report was read by the community members and those implicated were given an opportunity to explain them selves. Reactions from the district administrators like the Chief Administrative Officer, Local Council V, District Health Inspector, Councilors, CDRN etc were welcomed.
- Those implicated were not criminalized but advised to do better in community service and proper use of community public resources and to offer better service in the future in addition to honoring and respecting their jobs. Some of the culprits acknowledged their mistakes and promised to change and do a good job.
- Where capacity/administrative gaps were identified, the administrators promised to iron them out with those implicated.

On a personal basis,

- I developed a deeper understanding of issues of consensus in advocacy.
- Acquired additional knowledge and skills in advocacy
- Learnt the importance of employing creative approaches to advocacy(Public Expenditure Trucking surveys, dialogues)

- Shared my advocacy experiences with colleagues/ stakeholders
- Joined the movement of advocating for social change for and on behalf of small scale farmers and the whole local community in general in Gender, social, economic, health related issues. Learnt advocacy to promote and defend interests.
- Understood the need for information sharing in influencing development practice
- Networking with people and organizations for mass activism
- Engaging other CSOs to create coalitions advocating issues of Gender, democracy, human rights, peace and social justice.
- Contributing to movements of special interest/ marginalized groups to help bring their issues at the forefront of the development agenda.



Judith (Right) with Amerito (Caritas Kabale) during the mentees sharing session at the PELUM offices

Organizational good practices/lessons learnt

- Transparency. Each and every new development at CDRN is communicated to everyone irrespective of peoples' positions.

How the skills will be replicated to farmers

The benefits above will be replicated to farmer partners using the following strategies:

- Management and staff will be oriented and requested to adopt the new skills and approaches to SACU's plans, budget and implementation strategies on advocacy to be

rolled out to farmers.

- .Extension workers will be trained in the new skills which they inevitably will pass on to farmers and partners,
- .Training of farmers will be implemented deliberately and routine follow up will be done.
- .Selection of capable farmer partners to monitor resources and activities within their groups and communities at large
- .Information sharing of project activities and community resource by farmers and all stakeholders so as to promote accountability and transparency.
- .Exchange visits will be made for selected model farmers to enhance deeper appreciation and understanding of advocacy.
- .PELUM will be requested to provide technical backstopping through monitoring and refresher courses preferably to selected model farmers



Mentees sharing experiences with the country desk staff

I CAN SPEAK OUT NOW

By Nantume Sarah, Rural Community in Development

In the month of October 2010, PELUM Uganda organized an advocacy exchange visit programme for its member organizations and this lasted for 30 working days. I was placed at Environmental Alert a non governmental organization based in Kabalagala. During my placement period, I had a great experience and all this was in line of achieving the prior plan of PELUM to support its member organizations that had gaps in Advocacy; with those that had skills to act as their mentors. At some point during my placement I trundled off to discover a lot of things in the field of Advocacy and lobbying.

My own organization being purely a service provider organization, the whole idea of advocacy was just new to me. However, with the assistance of my mentor I was able to realize that Advocacy is about helping a person to be heard. With this I was able to realize that most people including my self can act as advocates .With deep understanding of Advocacy, I realized that often I was an advocate but I did not know about it. Several examples proved to me that I have been an advocate and also that I have interacted with advocates in my every day life. Such examples include, seeing parents listen to the needs and wishes of their children, managers responding to the views of their staff and friends standing by each other and offering support,all of whcih shows advocacy in our every day life.

I also realized that Advocacy is a tool that can be used in a variety of ways to ensure that the minority and disadvantaged groups in society have a means to know about their rights and also gainfully enjoy the same life opportunities as others. I believe that advocacy offers support for people who are seeking resolutions to any issues that are of concern to them, by ensuring that their voice is heard and that they understand their civil and human rights. With this I still say everyone should always speak up if we are to to become great advocates.

However, I noted that Advocates need to attend a number of skill building workshops led by more experienced organizations as felt by PELUM Uganda. These workshops strengthen the effectiveness of the advocates who can later build stronger organizations back in the communities where they work.

During the exchange programme I was able to share my unique grass root in line with my organization together with my mentor so as to help me learn more about the strategies and best practices of Advocacy and other human rights. Self Advocacy which requires courage and willingness to face opposition and political resistance was built in me but



Ms. Nantume speaking to PELUM staff about her experience in advocacy

it was initially my greatest fear to engage in this exercise. I realized that it was only standing tall in spirit, and respectfully addressing discrimination and demanding accountability that one could truly to make a positive difference in organizations and communities we work with.

For one to become a passionate believer, he/she should speak up when something is bothering him/her. It is no use complaining if you are not prepared to act is what I always tell my organization.

During the exchange programme I noted that, Advocacy by non profit organizations can lead to fundamental reforms in our society such as saving and improving lives and strengthening democracy. This was very exciting because I see my own organisaation working towards this.

By examining case studies and success stories together with my mentor, I learnt how I can also make a difference in my organization and the community at large. This was all based on the case studies that showed how Environmental Alert worked to make social change or shape public policy. The case studies also described the lobbying involved, other tactics including research, media advocacy or other forms of advocacy.

With the mentorship received, I can now gladly say that,

- I managed to convince my organization that we need advocacy programmes and it accepted to put a Campaign Advocacy and Lobby office in place.
- With the new proposal, I effectively participated to put efforts to see to it that advocacy becomes part of our projects come the next phase.
- Have had experience with different social groups after the exchange programme
- I have access to information which has helped me make decisions
- Most importantly, I have felt listened to as compared to before.

We are grateful to PELUM Uganda for the interventions



Steady steps are being made by staff and beneficiaries of SAP Kabale particularly in Advocacy for best practices in small holder farming for sustainable small holder farmer household livelihood improvement. The ‘software’ of the SAP Kabale staff towards Advocacy has been formatted and upgraded. We, in SAP Kabale, used to imagine advocacy as ‘a very expensive, confrontational and risky process for the fearless people but for sure, ever since we joined PELUM Uganda, our view has changed. We realized we could do simple steps with the available resources and create much on the advocacy arena. And so to begin with:

SAP Kabale started with ‘Farmer Exhibitions’ at sub county level with the involvement of the local sub county level agriculture extension workers and Community Development officers as the Judges for the exhibition. This was a creative attempt to orient the thinking of the Local Government’s agriculture extension system to appreciate the strength of the Sustainable Agriculture techniques in empowering the small holder farmer. We have a point to celebrate thus far:-

- The exhibited SAP practices have been adopted as the criteria for the qualification for community groups to receive a grant of UGX 5,000,000 as a Community Driven Development Fund (government’s grant given out to organized community members who exhibit good farming techniques for their self-led development.)
- And, needless to add, the SAP target farmers always have an upper edge towards sharing of the ‘development cake’ through the CDD fund and up to 06 target community groups of 24 have received this fund in just the first round of award. We attribute this to PELUM Uganda trainings in advocacy strategies and tools.

Following the farmer exhibitions, communities who had appreciated how much Sustainable Agriculture technologies had improved their lives and how much they believed that the techniques should be known more to other communities started to stage exhibitions in public gatherings like churches

with their own resources. This has made an impression on the Bishop, the legal holder of our programme activities and on the fellow community members that had not got exposure to the Sustainable Agriculture technologies because of our limited target area. This encouraged community wide interest in the Sustainable Agriculture programme with communities organizing private exposure visits to Sustainable Agriculture implementing farmers. This means more community members are preserving their environment, managing natural resources and ensuring sustainable household food and income security for the small holder farmer. A cascade of events followed the training of PELUM Uganda in advocacy making us realize that we can raise the Sustainable Agriculture voice creatively.

Through PELUM-Uganda, one SAP-Kabale staff benefited from a mentor-mentee relationship with Uganda Land Alliance. The relationship led to 8 women joining the Women’s Land Rights movement in Uganda and the communities are becoming more challenged by messages on women movement on land rights. Periodic messages from Uganda Land alliance are being relayed to the communities about women’s land rights. This has led to a process of scrutinizing cultures around land ownership and attempts to re-dress inequalities are closely underway as the staff increasingly receive many challenging questions about land in meetings and homestead visits.

Through interactions with PELUM Uganda, SAP Kabale staff came to the realization that we do much on field level and but government workers presenting our achievements to their supervisors as their own. We realized that we were actually promoting embezzlement of funds by government agencies since we were already doing the work that should have been done by the funds government had allocated to the same activities. We actively started attending the budget conferences at all local government levels so we can identify gaps and advocate for better budgetary allocations and offer synergies instead of doing it all.

PELUM might not be aware about the fact that its trainings/workshops have kept our staff on heels for further community empowerment action and highly motivated especially when the trainings meet the real expectations as PELUM has always endeavored to do during the yearly evaluation and planning sessions. The staffs who attend workshops have always interacted with colleagues and broken the extension work routine and learnt new ways from workshop participants and also gained an opportunity for career development and therefore a greater feeling of on-job career growth which is has been a very critical motivational factor.

SAP Kabale conclusively notes that PELUM Uganda’s trainings have stimulated big deals for communities in whole and community groups in particular, SAP as an institution, and the legal holder-the Bishop of Kabale Diocese. SAP Kabale Diocese staff are testing the strategies for good smallholder farmer institutional income generating activity stimulation as learnt from the ‘farmer entrepreneurship’ trainings.

About PELUM Uganda

Since 1995, PELUM Uganda has working to improve the livelihoods of small-scale farmers and the sustainability of rural communities, through the fostering of ecological land use management.

We:

- Share skills and knowledge about good practices and techniques, through a broad network of likeminded organisations
- Undertake research and demonstration projects
- Lobby for policies that better support small-scale farmers

PELUM Uganda is part of a 10-country-strong association of civil society organisations in eastern, central and southern Africa.

Contact us today to find out how you can get involved

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Under The Theme:

Farmer entrepreneurship and access to markets

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