

WOMEN'S DEMOCRACY NETWORK

Uganda Chapter

Empowering Women to Lead

**POLICIES AND BEST PRACTICES THAT HAVE WORKED TO
ENHANCE CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, ACCOUNTABILITY AND
TRANSPARENCY OF DUTY BEARERS TO CITIZENS
IN ARUA CITY, ARUA, MOYO AND KOBOKO DISTRICTS
IN THE WEST NILE REGION**



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attended community meetings, called into radio talk shows and signed petitions to make their voices heard, you made some of the leaders respond to your voices and ideas and contributed to improving service delivery and governance in the project areas.

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Acronyms

NED	National Endowment for Democracy
TAYOF	Teremunga Affirmative Youth Action Forum
UPE	Universal Primary Education
WDN-U	Women's Democracy Network-Uganda Chapter
WEWAP	West Nile Women Advocacy Platform
YDI-WN	Youth Development Initiatives-West Nile

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Following the general election in 2021 in Uganda, Women's Democracy Network-Uganda Chapter (WDN-U) with funding from the National Endowment for Democracy (NED) began implementing a two year project in one city and three districts of the West Nile region in Uganda. The four project areas included Arua city, Arua, Moyo and Koboko districts. The project sought to amplify citizens' agency, voice and effective participation in the democratization process after 2021 elections in Uganda. WDN-U had prior to the 2021 general election, observed the general election in Arua city, Arua district, Moyo and Koboko districts. WDN-U is cognizant of the fact that democracy as a system of governance is more appreciated by citizens if it produces tangible benefits in terms of service delivery and improvement of citizens welfare through effective management of public affairs and resources. Tangible benefits for citizens in a democracy happens when leaders understand their roles and are accountable to the citizens who elect them, and when citizens are knowledgeable on their rights and duties and hold their leaders to account.

The 1995 Constitution of Uganda in National Objective and Directive Principle X spells out the role of people in development. It states that the State shall take all necessary steps to involve the people in the formulation and implementation of development plans and programs which affect them. Objective XXVI (i) provides for accountability and states that all public offices shall be held in trust for the people. XXVI (ii) states that all persons placed in positions of leadership and responsibility shall in their work be answerable to the people.

The 1995 Constitution of Uganda in National Objective and Directive Principle XXIX further spells out the duties of citizens. Objective XXIX (f) states that it's the duty of every citizen to promote democracy and the rule of law.

Article 1 of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda states that all power belongs to the people who shall exercise their sovereignty in accordance with this Constitution. Article 1 (3) of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda states that all power and authority of government and its organs derive from this Constitution, which in turn derives its authority from the people who consent to be governed in accordance with this Constitution.

The provisions of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda highlighted in the preceding paragraphs were instrumental in the WDN-U two year project on amplifying citizens agency, voice and effective participation in the democratization process after 2021 elections in Uganda.

This handbook shares the best practices that were realized during implementation of the project. Chapter 1 of the handbook spells out the meaning of social accountability and how the concept was used to implement the project. Chapter 2 highlights the best practices which the duty bearers including political and administrative leaders in the project areas adopted to improve governance and service delivery as a result of civic engagement and citizen advocacy.

Chapter 3 provides some of the best practices that WDN-U, WDN-U NGO partners, media and citizen groups adopted to enhance responsiveness from the leaders on governance, democracy and service delivery at sub- county, district and national level.

The last part of the handbook Chapter 4 provides recommendations for future similar programs and a conclusion.

CHAPTER ONE

SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY AND HOW THE CONCEPT WAS USED TO IMPLEMENT THE PROJECT IN THE ARUA CITY, MOYO, KOBOKO AND ARUA DISTRICTS

1.1. Meaning of Social Accountability

Accountability is an essential ingredient of good governance. It among others ensures that public resources are effectively used for the benefit of citizens. Ackerman defines accountability as a “pro-active process by which public officials inform about and justify their plans of action, their behaviour and results and are sanctioned accordingly” (Ackerman, 2005:6).

The World Bank (2005) on the other hand defines accountability as a *proactive process by which public officials inform about and justify their plans of action, their behaviour, and results and are sanctioned accordingly*. To “be” accountable is to work with society and accounting agencies to improve government honesty and performance instead of doing one’s best to hide from scrutiny. The proactive behaviour that accountability demands requires dialogue, explanation, and justification (World Bank, 2005).

States put in place mechanisms to ensure that public resources are properly used and accounted for to the contributors who in this case are the public. However, in recent years there has been a call for participation of citizens and wider society in ensuring public accountability. Thus, social accountability which is based on civic engagement has emerged as an organized approach towards public accountability.

The World Bank has defined **social accountability** as “an approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement, that is in which it is ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations who participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability” (World Bank, 2004:1).

Social accountability focuses on the ways in which non-state or social actors can hold public officials accountable through various mechanisms (Malena et al, 2004). Smulovitz and Peruzzotti (2000) emphasize the mode of social accountability as sponsored by civil society organizations, social movements and media. Public demonstrations, protests, advocacy campaigns, investigative journalism and public interest law suits are commonly used mechanisms.

The concept of social accountability was used to implement this project through the use of various steps.

In September 2021, WDN-U organized and conducted a training for WDN-U NGO partners, media and citizen groups from the districts of Koboko, Moyo and Arua city. As a result of the training, the participants understood the roles of political and administrative leaders in a democracy and in governance and service delivery, the roles of the media, NGOs and citizens in enhancing accountability, transparency and good governance from leaders, the tools that media, NGOs and citizen can use to ensure accountability, democracy and good governance.

During the training, the participants discussed the concept of civic engagement and how to engage their leaders, how to document success stories, best practices and challenges in civic engagement, the complaints system in local governments and

how CSOs and media can use the system to make citizens voices heard including using tools like writing petitions, calling public hearings, tracking progress, and communicating with political and administrative leaders through meetings and letters.

At the training the media discussed their roles in enhancing social accountability and how CSOs can work with them to ensure that service delivery improves and democratic principles are adhered to. The media also discussed the challenges that they face in playing their watch dog role and what they have done to address them.

The CSOs learned how to do advocacy, write citizens petitions and to organize and hold effective community dialogues to strengthen communication and accountability by leaders to citizens. Community dialogues were adopted as a good platform for citizens to engage directly with their leaders.



***WDN-U training for the media and civic groups in Arua city,
Koboko and Moyo districts- September 2021***

Training for media and civic groups and media is important before they use different social accountability tools to promote good governance, democracy and service delivery. It enables

them to understand the concept, the tools at their disposal bearing in mind their context, challenges that may arise as they work with citizens to demand for accountability and good governance and to acquire skills and knowledge to advance social accountability for good governance and democracy.

In August 2021, WDN-U and her NGO partners in Arua city, Moyo and Koboko districts collected information on the health and primary education service delivery status using the citizens' report card (CRC). The report provided data that informed a large part of the project especially the engagement with duty bearers and discussions during the community dialogues.

Following the training on social accountability and civic engagement for NGOs, civic groups and the media, the three groups adopted different social accountability tools and methods to enhance accountability. The NGOs provided citizens with technical support to draft citizens' petitions on key concerns on education and health service delivery. The media used its platforms to cover and report on stories in the health and education sector and on governance. The duty bearers used their mandate as law makers to adopt by-laws to address emerging issues for the community. WDN-U at national level ensured that it used available spaces in the media, NGOs and in government institutions to highlight the concerns of citizens in the West Nile region and to provide information to duty bearers to inform decision making on the region.

CHAPTER TWO

BEST PRACTICES WHICH THE DUTY BEARERS IN THE PROJECT AREAS ADOPTED TO IMPROVE GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY AS A RESULT OF CIVIC ENGAGEMENT, CITIZEN ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT

Duty bearers for purposes of the project were political leaders including Local Councilors at district/city, sub-county/wards and village/cell level, district/division Speakers and their Deputy Speakers and Resident City/District Commissioners.

Administrative leaders were also included in the category of duty bearers and included parish chiefs, sub-county chiefs, town clerks, town agents, head teachers, teachers, health workers, community development officers, police, heads of department in various local governments and chief administrative officers.

“The combination of educating citizens on the roles of political and administrative leaders, the roles of citizens and CSOs including media and NGOs has eased the implementation of the project. Citizens know whom to petition or call when service delivery is not effective. The collaborative approach adopted by WDN-U has encouraged leaders to attend the community dialogues. They have realized that these forums provide a platform for them to share information on government programs, milestones attained and gaps. The leaders are also able to explain the challenges that they face in delivering services, their roles and how citizens can support service delivery, accountability and governance” -District Speaker-Moyo district

“Give practical accountability to citizens to enhance their involvement in government programs and their responsiveness to paying taxes. For example, ensure that administrative leaders fulfill their mandate of improving roads, garbage collection, improving performance in schools among others”. Adopt an attitude and practice of thinking together for the common good of your community-Local Council III chairperson, Koboko North division, Koboko municipality.

“Training political leaders is important for the success of social accountability programs. They must understand their roles. Citizens should also be educated to know the roles of their leaders and task their leaders to fulfill their mandate”- Coordinator, Teremunga Affirmative Youth Action Forum, Koboko district

For leaders to succeed in performing their mandate, the people in the electoral area should have their phone contact. Leaders should ensure that for every activity where they require citizens, they ensure that invitations for the activity are delivered in time. Leaders must be self-motivated and give hope to their electorate. At times, citizens will insult you as a leader. Do not retaliate with insults. Rather, explain to them why a problem has not been solved and how government processes work. Be composed and respond to the concerns raised even when you do not have immediate answers to their issues. Be present and listen to the issues raised. Be abreast with the work plan of government in your local area and give feedback to questions. Join the community in their different activities including those habits that you want them to stop. For example, if they drink too much, when you join them, explain to them the dangers of

alcoholism. The informal conversations can lead to the change you want to see. Ensure that you go back regularly to problem areas and continuously engage the people affected. Educate the community at every opportunity that you get. Be friendly to your electorate regardless of their diversity in terms of age, disability, religion among others. Work with administrative leaders to enforce laws, ordinances and by-laws applicable to the issues that affect your electorate. Adopt language that makes them see themselves in solving the problem(s) afflicting their community. Use every opportunity provided by different actors like WDN-U to link with your community. -Hon. Luiji Candini, district councilor, Arivu sub-county, Arua district

The following best practices were adopted by duty bearers to improve governance, democracy and service delivery as a result of civic engagement and citizen advocacy.

2.1. Local councils pass bye-laws to increase retention rates in primary schools

Community dialogues in Koboko North division in the Koboko district identified discos as a hindrance to children's school attendance. As a result the Council passed a bye-law in April 2022 abolishing discos. Council also passed a resolution to fine parents who do not send their children to school. The fine is 20,000/=. This was confirmed by the Senior Town Clerk of the division who was one of the participants at the WDN-U evaluation meeting in May 2022.

The Local Council III chairperson of Koboko North division, in the Koboko district, informed WDN-U during the mid-project evaluation in May 2022 that retention rates for school age going children in primary schools increased by 98 percent after the WDN-U and TAYOF community dialogues in 2022 on education in the division. Following the community dialogues, the Koboko North division passed a resolution to fine 20,000/= per child on parents who do not send their children to school. The fine increased retention of children in school.

2.1.2. Koboko North division introduces a garbage collection tax

The practice of community dialogues, enabled Koboko North division to introduce a garbage collection tax to improve garbage disposal in the division. The community adopted the tax because they understood its importance and they have seen the results of proper waste management. The current tax is 2000/= per home or private business on a monthly basis. The chairperson of Koboko North division in Koboko Municipality Hon. Lemeriga Sabino during the WDN-U end of evaluation workshop noted that: *“When you lead knowledgeable people your work as a leader is easier”*.

2.1.3. Laropi town council passes a by-law on food production and food security: Community dialogues in Laropi town council organized by WDN-U and WEWAP led to discussions between leaders and citizens on the issue of food insecurity. The leaders explained the draft by-law and the community agreed to support it.

2.2. Adoption of a school feeding program in primary schools

The advent of the policy on Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 in Uganda provided an opportunity for four children per family to get free education. The policy provided that parents would provide scholastic materials for their children and food. However, with each election cycle since then, the UPE policy has been politicized. In some cases, head teachers have been arrested by politicians and senior civil servants for requesting parents to pay a small fee to cater for meals for children while in school. As a result, performance in especially schools located in rural parts of Uganda has declined as children are unable to learn when hungry. With the adoption of community dialogues through the WDN-U project to enhance civic engagement, parents and teachers discussed the effects of lack of school feeding on education of their children. Some parents decided to contribute a fee for their children to have a meal in school and some schools resolved to start school gardens to feed children. The number of children attending afternoon lessons and improved performance was a result of the school feeding program.

In Lokwa Primary School in Metu Sub County and in Gbalala Primary School in Laropi Sub County respectively in the Moyo district the parents and teachers adopted the following resolutions.

The community resolved that the school feeding program should be made compulsory for all pupils and should be implemented by the school. The Feeding program should begin by February 7,

2022 with parents contributing 10 kgs of maize, four kgs of beans and a cash of 12,000/= for each pupil.

As a result of the school feeding program in the two schools above performance in comparison to 2021 improved as follows:

In Lokwa primary school, out of the 51 candidates who sat for the primary leaving examinations (PLE) in 2020, 41 pupils got second grade, 17 pupils got third grade and three pupils got grade four. In 2022, the performance was as follows: of the 56 candidates who sat for PLE, 26 got grade 2, 22 got grade 3 from 17 in 2020, four candidates got grade 4 from three in 2020 and 5 candidates were ungraded. The numbers of candidates increased in 2022 by five and more candidates (52) overall will get positions in senior one in comparison to 2020.

In Lobule sub-county, in February 2022, the School Feeding program was adopted in all the 12 primary schools in the sub-county following intensive sensitization by the sub-county leaders about the role of parents in the education of their children. The sub-county leaders noted that WDN-U and TAYOF had eased their work because previously they had relaxed about engaging parents because they thought they would not respond to their responsibilities in the education of their children.

2.3. Responsiveness by leaders following community dialogues, citizen petitions and media reports on service delivery gaps led to:

Education sector

- The fencing of Jiako primary school in Arua Central division in Arua city.
- Arua city plans to recruit 316 teachers following the gaps detected in the teacher: pupil ratio in the schools.

Construction of toilets is ongoing in Ombaci primary school in Koboko district following the media exposure of the need for toilets for both boys and girls in the school. The story on lack of toilets was covered by Abdurahuman Ayub a journalist with Vision group following the re-opening of schools in Uganda in 2021 after two years closure by government of Uganda to prevent the spread of covid19. Ayub is one of the journalists based in the Koboko district whom WDN-U trained in September 2021 on social accountability.

- Asuru primary school in Arua Central division was supplied with desks following the community dialogues in Pangisa ward which raised the pupils:desk ratio as a major concern.
- Parents are more willing to pay school dues to improve the performance of their children. The continuous community dialogues between leaders and parents have eased the response by parents to school dues geared towards improving the performance of their children. The improvement in the performance of children in Koboko North division in 2022 has enhanced the support parents give to their children and to

schools. 90 of the pupils who sat for PLE in 2022 in Koboko North division passed in division one in comparison to 50 in 2020.

- Community dialogues have given space for parents, learners, local council leaders and teachers to engage on issues affecting performance in the schools. Some old girls and boys in the schools have offered their time to mentor the pupils. As a result in Metu primary school in Moyo district 23 pupils registered for the PLE in 2022 PLE. All the pupils remained in school and passed. Nine were division two; 16 in division three; three in division four. This was the best performance in the last five years.
- In Liru primary school, teachers' houses are being constructed following a community dialogue by WDN-U and TAYOF where the issues affecting the education sector were amplified. So far one permanent house has been built and one as seen in the picture below is at roofing level. Two kitchens have been constructed. The school has also planted food crops in school gardens after adopting the school feeding program. The schools have adopted some incentives like provision of lunch to teachers to keep them in school.



Pictures taken by WDN-U CSO partner TAYOF on August 5 2022 in Koboko district, Lobule sub-county during a visit by the TAYOF coordinator (in orange t-shirt) to the school. The school has a school

garden to implement the school feeding program, the school in constructing teachers' houses (brick house, center picture) and the TAYOF team in a meeting with the school head teacher to follow up on resolutions adopted in the action plan in previous community dialogues.

Health sector

- A new theatre and doctor's houses are under construction in Bondo health center in Arua district.
- A general out- patient (OPD) is under construction in Lurujo Health Centre II in Lobule sub-county in the Koboko district.
- The exposure of areas of need through community dialogues has attracted partners to support service delivery gaps. For example, a ward in Laropi health Centre III in the Moyo district has been constructed under DR DIP program.
- Lobule health center III is being upgraded to health center IV. This will improve access to health services.
- Some health workers who were found to be absent often without valid reasons have been disciplined by local leaders in Lobule sub-county.
- As a result of a citizen petition, the lagoon in Arua regional referral hospital will be closed and be connected to the National Water Sewerage Corporation lines in Dadamu ward in Arua city where the sewage treatment plant is located.
- Open defecation and disposal of faeces in River Osu stopped after the community dialogue on health in Pangisa ward in Arua Central division in the Arua city.
- Two public toilets have been constructed in Olupimbunjuru trading Centre and Andifeku trading center in Arua district following the community dialogues in Arivu sub-county.

2.4. Working with previous effective elected leaders to educate citizens on the planning and budgeting processes and how to realize responsiveness from local governments

One of the best practices WDN-U has adopted in conducting community dialogues is to work with current and former district and city leaders who were/are effective in fulfilling their mandate while in office and also working with the current administrative leaders. This approach ensures that current leaders learn best practices that work in enhancing governance and service delivery. In the picture below, the lady facilitating a session on the budget cycle is Hon. Nezma Ocokuru a former Chairperson of Arua Hill division in Arua city (2016-2021). Her practical knowledge on the subject and her previous record as an effective leader has proven useful in ensuring that communities and their leaders understand how government processes work and how to engage CSOs and citizens to address obstacles to service delivery collectively. She ably explains the duties of citizens and leaders in ensuring good governance and service delivery.



Community dialogue in Pangisa Lower ward in Arua Central division- February 22 2022

2.5. Engaging administrative leaders to communicate to citizens at community dialogues Citizens can effectively demand for services and accountability if they have accurate information on the plans and budget of their area for different economic and social services. WDN-U and her NGO partners in the districts have built a good working relationship with duty bearers. This has eased the participation of administrative and local leaders in community dialogues. In the picture below, the Community Development Officer of Pangisa ward in Arua Central division in the Arua city is reading the education budget to the community to enable them to know the education service delivery activities that will be implemented in their ward.



Community dialogue in Pangisa Lower ward in Arua Central division- February 22 2022

A working relationship between political and administrative leaders and NGOs and citizen groups is relevant for amplifying citizens' voice for good governance and democracy. Good governance requires citizens to have information on government plans, budgets and programs and for citizens to have a platform to communicate their satisfaction and concerns on governance and service delivery with leaders. Corrective action is possible

when constructive dialogue takes place between leaders and citizens. According to Hon. Lemeriga Sabino the Local Council III the chairperson of Koboko North division in the Koboko municipality, during community dialogues other important issues that require redress emerge. This enables local leaders to have knowledge about the several issues affecting the citizens in their communities and informs prioritization during planning and budgeting.

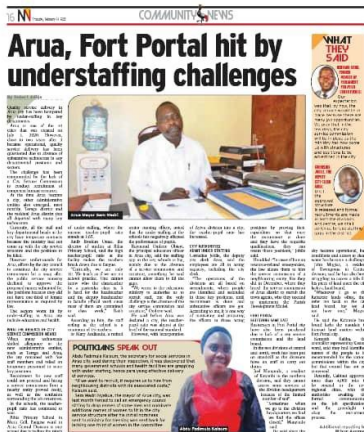
2.6. Rejuvenation of oversight committees in schools

In the project districts, as a result of the community dialogues, oversight committees in schools including the Parents, Teachers, Association (PTA) and School Management Committees (SMCs) were rejuvenated. The rejuvenated committees meet on a quarterly basis. This has increased responsiveness in schools as highlighted in some of the results indicated in the report in Section.2.3.

2.7. Mentors identified and mentoring in schools enhanced

One of the unexpected results of the project is the mentoring program in schools. In all the project districts, duty bearers, civic leaders in the communities, NGOs and media identified lack of mentoring as a concern that has among others led to high drop-out rates in schools located in rural areas. As a result, the duty bearers, NGO leaders in the project and media, identified the schools where need was highest and as a team, they conducted mentoring in primary and secondary schools to encourage children to stay in school. The mentoring in schools enabled local leaders to use the opportunity to conduct monitoring in regard to infrastructure and performance. As a

result, the local leaders integrated some of the findings to inform planning and budgeting for the financial year 2022/2023.



The lady in red in the New Vision story is the same lady on the right in Asuru Primary School where WDN-U conducted monitoring and mentoring. Her name is Hon. Kalsum Abdu Fadhimulla the Secretary for Social Services in Arua Central Division in the Arua city. She participated in the mentoring in schools with WDN-U and YDI-WN in the Arua city. She called WDN-U via telephone on February 28 2022 to inform them that the work of the organization has contributed a lot to enabling her committee to identify the real issues affecting primary education and has informed their discussions on the forthcoming division budget.

The mentoring in schools increased retention rates in some schools. In Koboko North division for instance, the number of children who passed in division one in the primary leaving examination of 2022 increased to 90 from 50 in 2020.



Mentoring in different schools by WDN-U NGO partners, media and local council leaders in Arua city and Koboko municipality

CHAPTER THREE

BEST PRACTICES ADOPTED BY WDN-U, WDN-U NGO PARTNERS, MEDIA AND CITIZEN GROUPS TO ENHANCE RESPONSIVENESS FROM THE LEADERS ON GOVERNANCE, DEMOCRACY AND SERVICE DELIVERY AT SUB-COUNTY, DISTRICT AND NATIONAL LEVEL

3.1. Best practices to attain results from social accountability programs

- Explain the program to duty bearers and citizens prior to the onset of implementation. This will ensure that all questions are answered before implementation.
- After a period of implementation, preferably quarterly, give feedback to the duty bearers, citizen groups and partners whom you work with to ensure that they are informed of the progress and emerging concerns throughout the project cycle. This also ensures that emerging issues during program implementation are responded to timely.
- Make citizens own their own advocacy. When citizens know that a project is theirs and intends to improve their welfare, they will implement the project with you. Further, when they realize their stake in improving governance and service delivery, it reduces the cost of implementing the activities in the program and increases the likelihood of attainment of results.
- Invest in building a good working relationship with district and lower local council leaders.

- The NGOs and civic leaders must be informed of the citizens' concerns, policies and programs of government and the budget cycle among others. A good working relationship with administrative leaders eases the work of NGOs since they can work with the administrative leaders to educate citizens on these issues.
- Action planning must be integrated in the community dialogues. This ensures that each stakeholder is held responsible for the concerns identified for redress. At the next community dialogue, reporting on actions taken by each stakeholder should be the first discussion before the agenda of the day. This ensures that results are realized from the community dialogues and that pending concerns are addressed.
- Radio talk shows and other media should be integrated in the program. Radio is still the most widely consumed source of information for the local communities. It is important to integrate it in social accountability, democracy and governance programming to increase outreach, education and discussion of issues that affect citizens and leaders as they implement programs for the benefit of citizens and the society at large.
- NGOs must make their programming center around issues that affect the citizen. This enhances resource mobilization from the local communities to address their own issues.

3.2. Citizens' report card informs community dialogues

The Citizens Report Card (CRC) which was conducted by WDN-U and her CSO partners in August 2021 in the districts of Koboko, Moyo and Arua city identified problems in the health and education sectors. The findings of the report informed the engagements between citizens and their leaders and some of the actions taken by duty bearers in response to citizens' concerns. The CRC backed the concerns raised by citizens in the community dialogues. Factual information is important for advocacy on good governance and democracy.

3.3. Citizens petition their local governments on service delivery concerns

Citizens' petitions are a tool to amplify citizens' agency and voice on governance, democracy and service delivery concerns. Petitions can yield results if citizens understand the importance of a petition, how to petition and to engage local leaders; and if they select respected citizens within their communities to present the petitions. In the project cycle, Arua city and district respectively realized the highest number of citizen petitions totaling to seven. The petitions addressed various concerns of citizens including: inadequate number of classrooms, toilets and teachers, the lagoon at Arua regional referral hospital that spilled into river Osu and contaminated the water for residents who rely on it for domestic use, lack of access to health centers and lack of access to safe water. The importance of knowledgeable NGOs in communities plays a big role in enhancing social accountability. WDN-U NGO partner Youth Development Initiatives-West Nile (YDI-WN) worked with local communities to impart knowledge on

petitioning that the organization had received from the WDN-U training in September 2021 on the topic of tools for social accountability. The YDI-WN's Executive Director in a red blazer in the picture below, provided technical support to community leaders to draft the petitions and she shared contact details of the relevant office bearers to whom the petitions should be handed by the lead petitioners. Further, the relationships that WDN-U and her NGO partners built with the media were important for the project because the journalists who had been trained by WDN-U together with her NGO Partners were knowledgeable on their role. The media covered and reported on the engagements by NGOs and citizen groups with the leaders on governance and service delivery concerns. The coverage brought district and national attention to the plight of citizens.



Mzee Swaib Ondonga reminding the Deputy Mayor of Arua central division of the issues contained in the citizens petition on the lagoon constructed by Arua regional referral hospital and its health effects on the residents around the hospital –January 17 2022



Mrs. Mary Andiandu, lead petitioner of the citizens petition on understaffing in Bibia primary school (seated in a red and cream African wear) reminding the Deputy Mayor and Deputy Speaker Arua Central division, Arua city about the issues in the citizen petition. In blue dress is the WDN-U CSO partner YDI-WN Executive Director together with journalists.



From left to right (Mzee Swaib Ondonga-lead petitioner), Arua hill division Deputy Mayor-Dratibi Jackson, Speaker- Osuga Rasul, Mrs. Mary Andiandu-lead petitioner, Deputy Speaker-Lomori Victor, YDI-WN-Executive Director- Driwaru Lillian, Journalist from Voice of Life

Citizen Petition presented to Ayivu division Speaker in Arua city

The citizen petition which was signed by over 100 citizens and received by the Speaker of Ayivu Division Hon. Joel Ayiko focused on the issue of upgrading the health center in Ayivu division from grade II to III. The citizens informed YDI-WN that in the past, they had written individual letters to the division on the two issues but had not received a response. Citizens' petitions that are signed by several citizens usually trigger faster responsiveness from leaders.



Lead Petitioners present the Citizens petition on behalf of Arivu ward to the Ayivu division Speaker Hon. Ayiko Joel- February 22, 2022

3.4. Citizens use social media to raise concerns on service delivery and governance

The participants at the WDN-U training strengthened their engagement on social media platforms on which the district and sub-county leaders are also members. For example, in the Koboko district, CSOs used the WhatsApp group of KOCISONET a local NGO which has leaders on the platform to expose service delivery issues. The leaders were responsive to service delivery issues and related matters raised on the platform. For instance,

the issue of poor garbage collection was raised on the platform. A week after the issue was raised, garbage is now regularly collected in the Koboko North division. This shows that leaders can respond to issues if citizens collectively advocate for good governance, better services and accountability. Citizens must use various platforms and tools to make their voices heard on the issues that affect service delivery and governance. Citizens must learn how to raise the issues precisely and provide alternatives on how to address the problem to limit excuses by leaders. To do this involves having knowledge on how government works, the resources available to local governments to deliver services, knowledge on who is responsible for what with regard to service delivery and governance and collective voice of citizens and citizen groups for responsiveness to the issues raised. Civic groups must work together to advocate for similar issues afflicting citizens. The big numbers of citizens and citizens groups advocating for the same things increases the likelihood of responsiveness from the leaders.

3.2. Media and social accountability

Following the WDN-U training in September 2021 where media was included as participants, journalists gained more insights on the importance of social accountability, the role of the media in ensuring that leaders are held accountable in the management of public affairs and resources and how to identify and engage relevant decision makers and both men and women, boys and girls on different stories as journalists collect information on the key issues affecting the health and education sector and related citizens' concerns. The media has given exposure to the concerns of citizens especially in the

education and health sectors in the districts of Arua, Koboko, Moyo and Arua city. Some of the issues have received national attention and responsiveness from duty bearers.

“As a result we put together many stories that exposed the problem that schools, learners and parents were dealing with as schools reopened in Uganda in February 2022. Below are some of the stories covered by journalists in Arua city. We also covered citizen petitions e.g. the petition on the lagoon of Arua Referral Hospital that is affecting the hygiene and sanitation of communities around the hospital”.-Male journalist, Arua One FM and New Vision.



“As the NBS journalist based in Arua, the story of the lagoon that spills waste from Arua regional referral hospital into River Osu was important. YDI-WN Executive Director ensured that we were informed on the issue and present during meetings with administrative and political leaders responsible for addressing the issue”.-Female Journalist, NBS TV

The issues discussed in the dialogues in Koboko district in February 2022 were covered in the New Vision newspaper. The journalists who received training by WDN-U in September 2021 and participated in the community dialogues reported on the issues discussed and comments by leaders in national newspapers.



The politicians who participated in WDN-U community dialogues and monitoring and mentoring programs in primary schools in Arua city speak out on the challenges affecting education service delivery. Understaffing in Jaiko Primary School and Bibia primary school have informed the engagement of politicians with the media. The lady in red in the New Vision story is the same lady on the right in Asuru Primary School where WDN-U conducted monitoring and mentoring. Her name is Hon. Kalsum Abdu Fadhimulla the Secretary for Social Services in Arua Central Division. She has participated in the mentoring in schools with WDN-U and YDI-WN in the Arua city. She called WDN-U via telephone on February 28 2022 to inform them that the work of the organization has contributed a lot to enabling her committee to identify the real issues affecting primary education and has informed their discussions on the forthcoming division budget.

In February Adidi Rashul reported a story on the shortage of drugs in the Koboko district. Despite reservations by some of the local leaders in the district, the story was covered by the Daily Monitor on February 1 2022. A link to the story:

<https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/news/national/koboko-hospital-runs-out-of-drugs-3701144> Adidi Rashul shared the story earlier on his twitter handle on January 17 2022. The responsiveness of the government National Medical Stores to this story is attributed to Adidi Rashul. The pictures that he took and the coverage of the story by Daily Monitor led to delivery of drugs by the National Medical Stores to the Koboko district on January 24-27 2022.



Adidi Rashul @adidirashul · 17 Jan

This is how empty most of the Government hospital medical stores have gone!.I captured this photo at koboko hospital where it has become a new normal for TB,HIV and Diabetic Patients to be sent home each time they go to pick their drugs. #Drug stock Out for three months.



Mawa 🇪🇬 and 2 others



7

6



On January 24-27, 2022, National Medical Stores responded and delivered drugs to the Koboko district.



Journalists must be trained on social accountability and its importance in improving governance and service delivery and democracy. Their knowledge on these concepts shapes their interest in stories in this regard and enhances their activism for good governance and democracy.

Some of the stories that media amplifies at local level also yield results. For instance:

- The story on limited classrooms in Dranya primary school in Koboko district led to the renovation of a four classroom

block in the school by Koboko district local government.

- A story by the media on stolen equipment items and drugs in Adumi health center III led to their recovery.
- A story on the poor state of the mortuary in Arua regional referral hospital has resulted into the ongoing construction of a new mortuary. A new out -patient department is also being constructed in Arua regional referral hospital.
- West Nile TV/NTV-U run a story on the poor state of the vehicle for blood bank. A new vehicle has been donated for the regional blood bank.
- The media has also organized causes for the common good. For example the media in Arua mobilized citizens to donate blood on March 8, 2023. The media in Moyo district organized public campaigns on door to door spraying against malaria. This increased public acceptance of the program.
- The media played a major role in creating awareness on COVID19 including vaccination to reduce the effects of the virus.

Best practices adopted by the media to support programs on social accountability and governance in West Nile region:

- Provision of free airtime for talk shows to improve good governance.
- Adopted recording of voices of communities on issues to ensure that they participate in discussions of public interest.
- The media has invested in developing feature stories on the West Nile region some of which have been covered in both the print and electronic national media. Some of the stories like the state of infrastructure in primary schools by

Adidi Rashul and Iceta Scovin of Nation media who were beneficiaries of WDN-U social accountability training have led national media to run a series on the state of infrastructure in primary schools in other districts of Uganda.



NTV Uganda runs the story covered by Adidi Rashil on the State of primary schools in Arua and Terego districts on February 26 2023

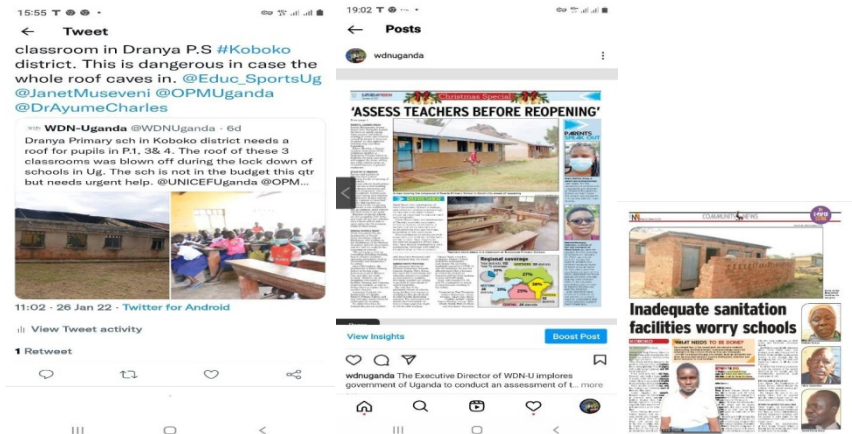


On March 13 2023, NTV Uganda runs stories on the state of primary schools in Bukedea district and a story on Universal Primary Education on March 16 2023

- The media has participated in community dialogues organized by WDN-U and her NGO partners to cover and report on issues that are pertinent for the community.
- The media has developed tailored programs that propel leaders to account.

- The journalists understand the importance of being objective and abiding by their ethics in reporting stories especially those related to governance and democracy.

3.4. WDN-U brings national attention to service delivery gaps and governance deficits in West Nile region



Some of the issues raised in the community dialogues organized by WDN-U and her NGO partners have been covered in national newspapers as highlighted above. The inclusion of the media in WDN-U's programs has increased visibility on governance and service delivery concerns and best practices in the West Nile region. More leaders are also willing to talk about the budget and shortfalls that are ultimately affecting service delivery. WDN-U and her NGO partners continue to use every space at national level to advocate for responsiveness to service delivery gaps in the West Nile region.

On June 28 2022, WDN-U Executive Director was requested by the Parliament of Uganda to make a presentation to MPs particularly those on oversight committees on the Role of Citizens' Participation in Enhancing Parliament's Mandate of Promoting Accountability and Efficient Service Delivery in the Public Sector in Uganda. The paper was presented alongside one by a Commissioner from the Ministry of Public Service on the legal and policy framework that regulates public sector transformation programs.

The invitation from Parliament was made bearing in mind the tremendous work that WDN-U has done in the West Nile region on enhancing accountability by public officers on service delivery to citizens. Some of the examples the WDN-U Executive Director used in her presentation are drawn from the work on enhancing social accountability in the West Nile region.

The interface with Parliament enabled WDN-U to communicate the existing gaps in transforming service delivery in the public sector. The two main issues that the Executive Director of WDN-U highlighted to MPs in her presentation which issues continue to affect public service delivery are lack of compliance and accountability by government officials and gaps in management of public service programs. A copy of the letter of invitation from Parliament is annexed to the report. The presentation to MPs is available on www.wdnuganda.org



3.5. WDN-U networks with CSO actors at national level on issues affecting governance and service delivery in the districts

On June 28-29, 2022 WDN-U was invited by the Uganda Women's Network (UWONET) to present a paper on the National Women's Manifesto 2021-2026 and some of the emerging issues since the launch of the manifesto in 2021. The 80 participants at the conference included leaders from NGOs, academia, private sector, local councils, chief administrative officers from selected local governments, youth leaders from NGOs and institutions of higher learning and Uganda Police. WDN-U's social accountability project funded by NED informed the discussion on the current areas for urgent attention in the education and health sectors. With regard to education, one of the major issues which WDN-U raised was the importance of listening to the voices of the beneficiaries of government policies as NGOs do advocacy at national level. For instance, on the issue of a policy gap on pregnant girls returning to school following the announcement by the Ministry of Education and Sports in 2021, WDN-U urged stakeholders to consult more on the policy. During the implementation of its current NED funded project, WDN-U was informed by some of the beneficiaries regarding pregnant girls returning to school that, the stigma, lack of support from families to care for the babies and poverty among others is affecting the return of pregnant girls to school. Some of the beneficiaries requested for skilling so that they are able to earn a living while others stated that they would be more comfortable returning to school after giving birth. They also would prefer to change schools so that

the stigma around them does not affect their education. WDN-U also shared the number of pregnant school age going girls in some of the districts like Moyo to further indicate the magnitude of teenage pregnancies among girls who were previously in school prior to the lock downs and closure of schools imposed by government of Uganda for two years amidst the COVID19 pandemic.

The current statistics on teenage pregnancies informs advocacy by organizations on girls education at national level. The leaders at the conference noted the importance of such data to inform their advocacy and decision making and also raised other issues affecting especially girls which government should address.

WDN-U also linked the current issues affecting education with the National Development Goal III and noted that if the problems inhibiting the quality education service delivery are not addressed, the human capital development which is a key pillar of NDP III and Uganda's development will not be attained within the timeframes stipulated in the national and international development plans and goals respectively.

Each of the participants highlighted actions they can take to address the issues highlighted in the national women's manifesto.



Aciro Rita
@RitaAciro

Day2: presentation continues
#Breakingbarriers and
#buildingbridges @PerryAritua
presenting the #womensmanifesto.
Numbers and quality of participation
is a manifestation that the
#womensmovement is alive.
@uwonet

@WDNUganda
@PerryAritua
@amwaafrika



11:47 · 29 Jun 22 from Kampala, Uganda ·
Twitter for Android

It is important for NGOs who work on improving governance and democracy to make local concerns to receive national attention. This is because budgets in Uganda and national decisions are made in Parliament and in the Cabinet which sits at national level.

3.6. Lessons learned from social accountability programming in the West Nile region NGOs

- Team work within the NGOs, civic groups and media is necessary for positive results. The duty bearers are more responsive when majority of the actors raising citizens' concerns speak with a common voice.
- Education of citizens is important for empowering citizens to pursue their common concerns.
- Success is realized when citizens own their concerns/advocacy.
- Different approaches as explained in the best practices for social accountability can be used to attain results from the program.

- Possession of information about WDN-U or the organization the local partners work with is important as one engages duty bearers.
- Current political leaders should be empowered to embrace and enhance social accountability.
- WDN-U is an important and visionary network. The work on social accountability has eased due to the technical support provided by WDN-U at the onset and during the implementation of the program.

Media

- The electorate plays a big role in making their leaders account through community dialogues and radio talk shows. These methods of enhancing accountability are important for social accountability programming.
- Accountability by leaders improves when NGOs, citizens, media and civic leaders put them to account.
- It is important for citizens to be empowered to use their voice and agency. Community dialogues gives citizens voice and agency in their governance.
- Leaders can respond to citizen concerns when they are engaged in constructive dialogue in community dialogues and radio talk shows.
- Media has power to create positive change.
- The formulation of policies after community dialogues shows that it is possible for leaders to respond to citizens' concerns as seen in the WDN-U social accountability project.
- More probing and verification of information to enable

accuracy is a good practice that the media and NGOs should emulate.

- More publicity by media on citizens' concerns is necessary for improving governance, service delivery and democracy.
- Radio talk shows are important for programming on social accountability.

Challenges in implementing social accountability programs NGOs

- The negative attitude of some leaders at the time of receiving citizen petitions should be addressed.
- Resource constraints affect the expansion of the program to all sub-counties/ wards in the district/city.
- Poor enforcement of by- laws and resolutions of local councils' affects outcomes expected from the by-laws and resolutions.
- Poor follow up of district ordinances for example the education ordinance in Moyo district which was passed by Moyo district council 2015 affects the intention of the ordinance.
- Bureaucracy in local government especially MOUs with NGOs affects the implementation period of the program.
- Lack of capacity building for political leaders at local government affects their output and impact on citizens.
- Frequent transfers of technical staff for example CAOs and city clerks of Arua city affects programming because each CAO or city clerk requires a new briefing about the programs of NGOs.

Media

- Failure by some duty bearers to respond to invitations for community dialogues affects outcomes anticipated of dialogue.
- Threats of journalists by some duty bearers and stakeholders affects the work of the media.
- Negative labeling of media by some actors affects their involvement in the media and ultimately denies the citizens information from public officials.
- Demand for facilitation (brown envelopes) by community/local leaders prior to their participation in community dialogues affects the objectives of the dialogues.
- Logistical challenges to expand outreach of the media in communities reduces the participation and citizens voices in governance and democracy.

Local leaders

- Transport affects the monitoring role of councilors and their ability to hold regular community dialogues with citizens.
- Enforcement of by-laws on night discos bans is a challenge in Koboko district.
- Expectation of facilitation by some community members affects attendance by all members of the community invited to attend community dialogues.
- The education and health sector still face specific challenges including: early pregnancies and high drop-out rates of the girl child.
- Poor staffing in health centers continues to affect health

service delivery.

- Negative attitude by some health workers affects service delivery and usage of health facilities by some citizens.
- Teacher pupil ratio is very high in some schools and continues to affect access to quality education.
- Pupil classroom ratio is still too high in some schools. The congestion in some classrooms affects the quality of education delivery.
- Poor latrine coverage in school is still challenge. For example Arua primary school has over 4000 pupils with a latrine coverage of two sections for girls and two for boys.
- Poor parental care/domestic violence affects access to education for some children. Some parents do not want to take care of their children.
- The post COVID19 era has led to high dropout rates and a hard economic situation for most families. This affects their prioritization of the meagre resources. For some families food is the major expense while education takes a back seat in their order of priorities.

New initiatives from the WDN-U social accountability program Local council leaders

- The local council easily introduced new pricing on garbage collection due to the relationship it has built with the community through community dialogues.
- In Arua city, the local council of Arua Central division successfully relocated street vendors in order to maintain hygiene and sanitation and order in the city.

NGOs in Moyo, Koboko and Arua city and Arua district

- Mentoring of learners in schools from primary five-primary six.
- Training of councilors on their roles.
- Sensitization of relevant bodies of the districts on social accountability.
- Monitoring education service delivery in primary schools especially post COVID19.
- Some old Boys (OBs) and old Girls (OGs) of some of the primary and secondary schools in Moyo and Koboko districts respectively joined WDN-U NGO partners in the districts to mentor pupils and students in both primary and secondary schools.

3.7. WDN-U awards best performing councilors, administrative leaders and NGO partners in the districts of Koboko, Moyo and Arua and Arua city

One of the ways to improve democracy, good governance and service delivery is to award the best performing local government leaders in both the political and administrative sections, media, civic leaders and NGO partners. The individuals and organizations who work with national NGOs in different leadership spaces within and outside local governments and in the media to enhance social accountability, good governance and democracy are critical to enabling results to be realized from programs as highlighted in various sections of this handbook.

On March 6 2023, WDN-U, following identification of the best performing local government leaders in both the political and administrative wings, media and civic leaders awarded the individuals who used their leadership spaces to improve service delivery, good governance and democracy. Awarding excellence can motivate other leaders to do their best to transform their communities within the resources at their disposal. Awards can be in different forms including certificates of appreciation and plaques. Organizations can also identify tools that their NGO partners need to do the programmatic work and award them as a sign of appreciation. WDN-U awarded two laptops to her NGO partners WEWAP and TAYOF in Moyo and Koboko districts respectively and a printer to YDI-WN in Arua city.

WDN-U presented certificates of appreciation to the political and administrative leaders, media, NGO partners and civic leaders who use their spaces to amplify citizens' agency, voice and effective participation in the democratization process after 2021 elections in Uganda.



Mara Nsangi NBS TV based in Arua city (L) receives a certificate of appreciation for reporting and coverage of citizens' concerns on service delivery and governance in Arua city, WEWAP receives a laptop (R) from WDN-U



TAYOF (L) receives a laptop from WDN-U, YDI-WN (C) receives a printer, group photo (R) with the political and administrative leaders, NGO partners, civic leaders and media from Moyo, Koboko, Arua district and Arua city- March 6 2023 in Arua city

Conclusion

Social accountability programs can be successful if duty bearers, civic groups, media and NGOs understand their roles and work together using their expertise and platforms for the transformation of the communities in which they work and live. Orientation of duty bearers, NGOs, media and civic groups in the communities on their rights and roles is important in the initial phases of social accountability programming to ensure that all actors are clear on the mandates and work for the common good of the people. Citizens must be empowered by government, NGOs, media and other CSOs including religious and cultural leaders to play their civic duties to improve democracy and governance. Citizens pressure on leaders and engagement of the relevant duty bearers yields positive results for overall development of communities. Finally, the ownership by citizens of their rights and roles on how and who should govern them plays a major role in transforming society in the economic, social-cultural and political spheres of life.

WOMEN'S DEMOCRACY NETWORK

Uganda Chapter

Empowering Women to Lead

Women's Democracy Network - Uganda Chapter (WDN-U) is a local civil society Women's organization affiliated with the Women's Democracy Network (WDN) www.wdn.org that seeks to empower women to pursue activism and leadership in the public sphere to enhance women's rights and gender equality.

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