

# **A WORKBOOK FOR LOWER LOCAL COUNCILORS IN UGANDA**

**Perspectives, Laws and  
Operational Guidelines for LCI, II &  
III Actors**

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# Foreword

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Over the past three decades, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung (KAS) has been at the forefront of shaping political processes and participation in various ways. Among others, we contributed towards shaping discourses and policies for bettering decentralization efforts in Uganda. We have also closely worked with key stakeholders such as local politicians, the Uganda Local Government Association (ULGA) to continue strengthening local governments so that the delivery of public services could be improved. For decades, we have been using Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) materials such as workbooks to conduct civic education even to remotest locations in Uganda. We have largely worked through GAIN Uganda, a loose network of over a dozen civil-society organizations in Uganda to get more citizens to engage and participate in the governance of their local areas.

Our quest to improve local governance and political participation has been made possible through collaboration with both local and international partners. It is particularly important to highlight how work with the European Union (EU) has been instrumental in consolidating our efforts. Over a decade, we worked with the EU to implement a governance and accountability project in 18 districts in Uganda. Our work with the EU to strengthen local government was once again refreshed in 2019 when we collaborated with the Government of Uganda under the Development Initiative for Northern Uganda (DINU) to implement the “Strengthening Performance and Accountability through Community Engagement – (SPACE)” project.

During our engagement with the local government actors over the past years, we have learned that there are multiple state and non-state projects which focus on developing the capacities of higher local government actors in Uganda. However, little to nothing has been done to support the lowest local government actors. Truly, if the situation persists,

grassroots and local communities in Uganda shall continue to struggle to benefit from improved public services. This is partly why we have come up with this publication to act as an important guideline and operational manual for local councilors in Uganda.

Because local councilors are at the center stage of decision-making processes at the lowest levels of local government in Uganda, we believe that this workbook shall emerge as their reference text for becoming more effective. Indeed, one of the topics digested in the workbook is a step-by-step guide on how councilors can become effective.

I would like to express my sincere appreciation to Ojok Okello who provided technical assistance and support towards the compilation, review, and production of this workbook.

I desire that with this workbook, local councilors in Uganda shall find relevant insights and practical examples which are helpful for enabling them to become effective public duty-bearers as we continue building a more democratic country.

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# Preface

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Uganda's decentralization agenda is facilitated through a five-tiered Local Government structure that starts from LC1 (Village level), LCII (Parish Level), LCIII (Sub-County / Town Council Level), LCIV (Municipality, Division and/or Town Board Level), and LCV (District Level). The supreme law which enables the implementation of decentralization and devolution of functions, powers, and services of government at all levels of government to ensure accountability and service delivery is the Local Government Act 1997.

Theoretically, the Act provides for a robust framework that supports all five tiers of the local governance structures in Uganda. However, in practice, most resources and capacity building by both the state and other non-state actors are concentrated at the top-tier, namely, LCV, IV, and III. Local Council I & II are hugely underinvested and not supported resulting in lackluster performances. For instance, the LC I & II Officials have only been elected twice since 1986 when the current NRM administration came to power. The 2018 elections were held after a lull period of 17 years. This is against the mandates of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, Article 181(4) states that local government elections will be held after every five years.

Moreover, civil society actors working on governance projects have also placed little to no emphasis on supporting the lower local government structures in Uganda yet they are the foundation upon which the decentralization agenda in Uganda would be enabled to function more effectively.

This workbook does not only identify laws, policies, and regulations that are meant to ensure effective operations of lower local Councils in Uganda, but it also provides insights and guidelines on how these laws and policies can be implemented in practice. For purposes of this report, lower local councils shall refer to LCI, LCII & LCIII. Specifically, the workbook identifies ten key topical areas of local governance that local councilors face on a day-to-day basis and dissects

each of them to provide a step-by-step guide on how local councilors can fulfill their conditionally and legally mandated roles and responsibilities.

The ten topical subject matter areas illuminated in this workbook, include: being an effective councilor; chairing council meetings; effective planning; taking climate action; resolving community conflicts; operating a local council court; fostering youth participation in politics; fighting corruption; enacting/making bylaws, implementation of the Parish Development Model.

The assignment was conducted primarily through desk work research supplemented with targeted interviews with selected legal experts and local government actors.

Ojok Okello



# 1. Becoming an Effective Local Councillor

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## Introduction

There are many aspects to being an effective local council leader. This workbook will help you to get up to speed on the main areas that require focus and attention. It will provide councillors with insight and assistance with the key skills which will help them to be most effective in their roles. The workbook can also serve as a key toolbox packed with many of the key skills, approaches, and tactics that make for an effective local councillor. It may even challenge you to reconsider how you have approached aspects of the role to date. In effect, it provides some pointers on how best a councillor can be most effective in his/her day-to-day duties.

## The role and functions of a Local Councillor

According to the Local Government Act of 1997, the key functions of Council Chairpersons are;

- a. To be political head at that level (Village, Parish, or Sub-County).
- b. To preside over the council and executive committee meetings.
- c. To monitor the general administration of the area under his or her jurisdiction.
- d. To oversee the performance of persons employed by the Government to provide services in the council's area of jurisdiction and to monitor the provision of Government services or implementation of projects in the area under the council's jurisdiction.

The Local Government Act (1997) also lists the following as core functions of the sub-county, parish, and village executive committees;

The sub-county, parish, or village executive committee shall oversee the implementation of policies and decisions made by its council and shall;

- a) Assist in the **maintenance of law, order, and security**.
- b) Initiate, encourage, support, and participate in **self-help projects** and mobilize people, material, and technical assistance concerning self-help projects.
- c) At the village level **vet and recommend persons** in the area who should be recruited into the Uganda Peoples' Defense Forces, the Uganda Police Force, and the Uganda Prisons Service and local defense units.
- d) Serve as the **communication channel** between the Government, the district, or higher local council, and the people in the area.
- e) Generally, **monitor the administration** in its area and report to the higher or district council.
- f) **Monitor projects** and other activities are undertaken by the Government, and NGOs, CBOs, and other private sector activities in their areas of jurisdictions.

## The broad responsibility of councilors

Generally, Councilors have several broad leadership responsibilities. These can include:

1. Leading the **development of strategies and plans** for the area, balancing different needs, identifying priorities, and targeting resources in a time of fiscal constraint.
2. **Providing democratic accountability** for public services and ensuring that service providers are ac-

countable to service users in delivering quality and value for money

3. **Bringing together individuals and agencies** in the area – and across the public, private, voluntary, and community sectors – to tackle social, economic, and environmental challenges.
4. **Carrying out specific regulatory duties** and ensuring sufficient scrutiny of council plans, policies, and decisions, and spending plans.
5. **Acting as community leaders** in facilitating resident, community, and business participation in all aspects of decision making and the shaping of services
6. **Communicating council policies and decisions** to the local people.

In summary, Councilors who stamp out a good reputation in their area earn the respect of the electorate, who – in turn – repay them at the ballot box. In itself, this is a compelling reason for taking the role of the ward councilor seriously.

## Effective Local Councilors

In all aspects of their role, effective local councilors are likely to be:

- a. Visible, accessible, and accountable.
- b. People who live locally – understanding the local community and standing up for it.
- c. Proactive individuals – Taking action, listening to, and being available to local people.
- d. People who understand that ordinary citizens value their availability, time, and ability to take action more than their core functions, such as, attending council meetings, for example.



## Activity 1 – planning your time as a local councilor

Think about the time you spend on all your council duties in a typical month, e.g. attending meetings, meeting local people, settling land disputes, solving cases of domestic violence, etc.

Using the pie chart, apportion the time you spend on each activity to build up a picture of how you are fulfilling your role as a village councilor.

After drawing the pie chart, reflect on your results and share it with other local councilors concerning what was said earlier. Are you spending sufficient time on the activities that local people value most? If not, why not? Does the analysis suggest to you that you might need to change your approach in any way



## Activity 2 – how much do you know about your village, parish, or sub-county?

Think about the area covered by your ward – the different communities who live there, the industries and workplaces, and the infrastructure that exists to serve and support local people. Write down what you know about the following:

- How many different languages are spoken in your ward?
- How many disabled people live in your village?
- How many public servants are in your area?
- How many schools, health facilities, churches are in your village?

- What were the most recent educational results for the schools in your village area?
- What are the commonest criminal activities in your area?
- Who are the local opinion formers and prominent leaders in your village?
- How many polling stations are in your village?
- What percentage of people voted in your village in the recently concluded elections?

Reflect on your responses to the questions above. How well do you feel you know your ward now? Could you learn more? Would you feel comfortable being asked any of these questions by one of your constituents or the local media?

## Understanding your village/parish/ sub-county

The role of representing a group of several thousand local people is complex because of the patterns of change in social and political life in recent decades. Communities are increasingly diverse and in some areas, there can be frequent movement of people in and out of the community. Understanding the very nature of your ward is not always as easy as it seems. You may have lived in the area for many years. But the chances are that you will not know all of the communities who live there or all of their issues and problems.

If you are a local councilor, you must get to know your ward. The people who come to you looking for help can tell you quite a lot about the area, but you will need to find other ways of getting to know the ward. Speaking to other local community leaders may help, e.g. councilor colleagues, clan and cultural leaders, the local police commander, teachers, or senior managers within the council.

You can schedule a monthly walk, ride or drive around different parts of your area focusing on particular ‘trouble spots’ or areas subject to rapid social, economic, or environmental change. It is also important to build up a good network of contacts – a list of names, telephone numbers, and email addresses for people from a range of organizations that operate in your village. Good networking can enable you to respond effectively to any local issues which arise, e.g. you may need to be proactive in consulting local people and organizations on relevant issues before council decisions are taken. Keeping in close contact and networking should also enable you to establish an ‘early warning system’ to find out about issues that concern the ward but do not make it onto committee agendas.

Your council will hold a wealth of information analyzed at the ward level. This data can be useful in helping you to formulate and review policies and services in your ward. It should also help you to understand your ward’s community needs.

In doing so, you should recognize that there may be mixed views on what is right for the area and how people might view any proposed changes, e.g. while some local residents may favor the construction of a factory, you should be aware of the environmental and other negative consequences of such projects.

Understanding the needs of your ward may not always be as clear-cut as it seems.



### Activity 3 – who would you contact?

Imagine you are faced with the following developments in your ward. Who would you contact?

- a. You have received calls from residents complaining of ongoing problems of cattle trespassing people's gardens and destroying properties.
- b. A youth group asks for your support in mobilizing resources to start up a vocational training school.
- c. A church asks you to facilitate the roofing of their worship center.

Look at the answers you have given. Do you have all of the contact details for these organizations and individuals? If not, what can you do to get hold of this information?

## Representing local voices

The task of representing a diverse and mobile mix of communities, groups, and individuals is a complex one. After all, some groups can be very hard to engage. But generally speaking, the broader your range of approaches to community contact, the more people you are likely to reach.

In addition to representing individual voters, councilors should try to keep in touch with:

- Local opinion formers such as action groups and community group leaders, residents' association chairs, leaders of leisure groups, local media, and 'stalwarts' of the community.

- Highly mobile groups, including Boda-Boda who pass through a community quickly without ever becoming involved in it.

## How do you make yourself known to those in your local area?

Good use of social media, contact cards, leaflets, letters to local organizations and local press; Contact with the local media and other organizations in your area, attend local events and meetings, social and religious gathers, etc.

## Representing community interests

Discovering the needs of different groups in the community is an important part of your role. Occasionally there will be conflicts of interest requiring sensitive judgment. Representing these different views in an open and reasoned way is a crucial part of your role. In doing so, you will often need to act for both individuals and neighborhood groups.

### *This will require skills in:*

**Listening** – actively finding out what people think and want. This can be done by knocking on doors or walking around the village, or by seeking out groups that you may not know well, e.g. mother and toddler groups. You may prefer to use community barrazas to meet people face to face and discuss the issues that keep them awake at night.

**Questioning** – sympathetic questioning to get to the ‘heart of an issue’, to generate thoughts and ideas, and to challenge extreme views, uninformed opinions, and misleading information.

**Advocacy** – ensuring that local voices are heard when issues are debated and decisions are taken. This can often involve speaking up for those people whose views are underrepresented, unspoken, or frequently ignored.

**Facilitating** – helping individuals and groups to come together to discuss issues affecting the ward, to debate different points of view, and to reach a consensus on solutions that may meet local needs.

**Giving information** – talking to people and providing information to enable them to understand local government services and processes.

Good use of social and electronic media- your ability to communicate effectively and sensitively in the 'virtual' world will do much to enhance your effectiveness as a local councilor. But it is important to follow the rules and procedures set out by your council for doing this. You should always keep what you write or 'blog' professional at all times, and following what you signed up to in agreement when you were elected.

## Local campaigns

As part of your ward work, you may become involved in, or lead, local campaigns. This could involve anything from encouraging people to adhere to presidential directives or encouraging parents to fight against early childhood marriages. In supporting a local campaign, you should consider:

- a. Carrying out some consultation to find out how widespread support for the idea is.
- b. Helping to organize a campaign group that brings together people who can assist.
- c. Organizing petitions or public meetings. Helping people to make presentations to, or ask questions at, committees.
- d. Bringing different groups together to negotiate solutions.
- e. Engaging the local media and publicizing the campaign on different social and community gathering platforms.

## Possible tensions and challenges in your village role

- Village/community interests versus political interests
- getting things done versus consulting widely
- strategic needs versus local objections
- balanced views versus single-interest politics
- Asking for views versus avoiding tokenism.



### Activity 4 – community engagement: whose voice is it anyway?

Imagine the council has asked you to represent the views of your community in the following situations. How would you seek views in these situations and who would you speak to?

Gathering user views on the need and where to drill a borehole in your village. In doing this, you should identify and analyze how well access to safe water affects the public health of your village. Identify what support there is within the community for making this project work. How many times have you consulted people in this way? How often do you give your thoughts on people's likely views without taking the trouble to canvas their opinions?

## Communicating and influencing

Understanding fully the nature and needs of your ward and making the effort to truly represent local people should provide you with a strong mandate for action. For example, you can:

- Speak with confidence on behalf of your community when issues affecting your ward are debated or decisions need to be taken.

- Assess whether there is general satisfaction with council services – and those of other partner agencies – in the ward and whether local people believe they are getting the best value from the money being spent
- Support community action and promote self-help among your constituents by understanding their aims, aspirations, views, and tactics.
- Promote partnership working between statutory bodies, private sector firms, and NGOs in response to community needs.

For many people, it is this satisfaction of acting on behalf of their local community that encourages them to become elected councillors. But the biggest challenge for local councillors is often in getting the council or an outside body to take local views into account when making decisions – a challenge that will require you to develop your communication and influencing skills.

In influencing decision-makers, you will need to use your skills and judgment, but should always adhere to the following ground rules:

- prepare for meetings by studying the agenda and making sure you are properly informed and fully prepared about the issues to be discussed – do not ‘hijack’ a meeting and raise issues that are pertinent to you but irrelevant to the debate.
- Play an active part in the debate and form sound conclusions based on what is best for the community – and then abide by any majority decisions.
- Ensure, with other councillors, that the council’s deliberations and decision-making procedures are properly managed – be robust in your scrutiny.
- Represent the whole electorate and not just those who voted for you; listen, and then represent the

views of the community when discussing council business and working with outside bodies.

- Maintain proper standards of ethical behavior as an elected representative of the people.

The biggest challenge for local councilors is often in getting the council or an outside body to take local views into account when making decisions.

What bodies might you seek to influence other than the Council? How would you do this?

## Key influencing skills

- **Social skills** – the ability to interact successfully with other people in most given situations
- **Information skills** – the ability to have data relevant to the debate, knowing what the issue is, and understanding the context in which it occurs
- **Judgment** – an ability to assess all aspects of the information content and social skills experience in communicating with people
- **Good use of technology and social media** to influence when you aren't influencing 'in person'.

Another key feature of your communicating and influencing role is the impact that you have on the local media. In a democracy, the media is a vital mechanism for ensuring that the transparency of local political decision-making and for holding councils and elected councilors to account. There is a generally held assumption that local government gets a 'bad press', but evidence suggests that local media, in particular, are willing to present local government in a positive light, if handled in the right way.

## How councilors can do consultation

- **Surveys** – can be paper-based or sent by email
- **Focus groups** – get a selection of people together to debate an issue
- **Roadshows** – take your campaign out in the ward and ask for views
- **Newsletters** – produce a local newsletter and ask for feedback
- **Blogging** – share your thoughts and invite responses.

## Community Barraza

Organizing community Barraza can help your community members to discuss issues with you face-to-face is one of the ways to communicate effectively with your local community. But if they are to work, they must be effective, efficient, and accessible. The following checklist will enable you to make them so.

- ideally providing ways in which you can have a range of opportunities appropriate for the residents (e.g. school PTA meetings, markets, social gatherings)
- make them regular, memorable, and at times when people can attend
- At accessible venues for all - check disabled access and provision of hearing loops, etc.
- Safe and not isolated for councilors and residents.



## Activity 5: Give us more details about a crime in your village?

*Imagine you have been asked to give a press briefing in the situation below. Identify what your key message (or headline grabber) might be and what you want to achieve from the press communication:*

Following a defilement case in your village, a local radio station has called you to give specific details of the crime. You are supposed to make the listeners know who both the perpetrator and the victim of the crime are. What would your response to the journalist sound like? Look again at your response to the scenario above. Have you been faced with such a media call before? Do you generally feel you have the knowledge and/or confidence to handle media relations? Do you need to brush up on your communication and influencing skills?

## Managing casework

Some councilors find casework the best part of being a councilor – the opportunity to sort out problems for people who find the council ‘an impossible nightmare’. For other councilors casework is an impossible nightmare.

### Your casework can come from a variety of sources:

- Letters, telephone calls, e-mails, and social media (Facebook, Twitter, etc.)
- community Barraza/meetings, advice sessions, and doorstep calls
- Campaigning and other political activity.

A specific and complementary workbook in this series on Handling Casework can provide you with detailed guidance on how best to manage the casework you receive. In summary, the general steps you will need to consider are:

- Identifying what the problem is – establish the facts and find out how your constituent wants you to help. Identify whether there is a long history to the problem and who has been approached in the past. Avoid promising to sort out every problem, but do offer a sympathetic ear at all times.
- Referring the problem to the appropriate local authority – you may want to put your concern in writing, although most councilors find that a quick face-to-face discussion, telephone call, or email is quicker and easier in sorting out casework problems. Get in the habit of taking copies of all correspondence.
- Providing feedback – after you have made initial inquiries, let the constituent know what you are doing and keep them up to date with progress and eventual outcomes. They will not know what is going on unless you tell them.
- Considering the wider issues – reflect on the issues raised by the casework and let your local councilors know. Several similar concerns raised with councilors may suggest that an issue needs to be dealt with by a new or revised policy or a scrutiny review. Where you have had success, it is worth letting your fellow local councilors know in case they face a similar situation.
- Always try and publicize your success to local residents.

Dealing with casework will require you to develop your own simple, but effective, ways of managing both the information and paper flow. Good note-keeping and diary management will help, as well as an efficient filing system. It is also worth reviewing your casework files from time to time to enable you to monitor and assess your performance.

## Casework – some examples

**Direct query** – a farmer asks when the sub-county Vet officer come to the village.

**Indirect query** – a mother, asking on behalf of her pregnant daughter if the health center II facility has now started offering maternity services.

**Complaint** – a farmer comes to you to complain about incessant theft of his maize from the garden.

**Service request** – a market vendor asks how much money she is supposed to pay.

**Community issue** – a group of youth lobby for you to help them access a government self-help fund to address unemployment.

## Monitoring your casework

- How many people contacted you with problems in the last year?
- Who were these people – gender, age, class, employment status?
- How did people contact you?
- How many cases were you able to resolve satisfactorily and how does this compare with previous years?
- What was the profile/nature of these problems, e.g. land, domestic violence?
- How do your casework load and type compare to that of other councilors?
- Do your answers to the questions above suggest any improvements you could make?



## Activity 6: how are you managing your case files?

Consider the following examples of casework. Write down the steps you would take to resolve the issues presented.

- A farmer comes to you complaining that his neighbor's cows and goats are always destroying the crops on her farmland?
- A woman report to you a challenge of domestic violence she faces from her husband.

Is this typical of the casework you face? How often do you review your casework performance? Are you sure that the number of problems brought to you adequately reflects the issues and concerns that individuals may have in the area?

## Final summary

As a local councilor, you have a crucial role in ensuring local democracy works and is believed in by residents. You are the lynchpin of your local community and the bridge between your residents and the government.



## Activity 7: Where do you go from here?

Look back over the material contained in earlier sections of this workbook and consider the following:

- (a) What key action points can you identify to improve your effectiveness as local councillor, i.e. what three or four things might you start doing, keep doing or stop doing?
- (b) Have you identified any gaps in your knowledge or shortcomings in your personal skills? If so, please set these out below and identify how any further training or development might help you, e.g. further reading/research, attending courses, coaching, mentoring, work shadowing, etc.

## Resources

### Local Government Act 1997

## 2. Effective Chairing of Council Meetings

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### Introduction: Why effective chairing is important

Meetings are a traditional and essential component of local government. Indeed, Article 24 of the Local Government Act 1997 mandates Chairperson to preside over the council and executive committee meetings. For councilors, meetings serve as a forum for discussion and agreement, planning and monitoring, communication, and leadership. Used appropriately, meetings can challenge, inspire, illuminate and inform. And while they are not the only meetings that councilors will be asked to attend, committee meetings, in particular, are a mainstay of the political management process. Ensuring an effective Council meeting and debate needs a degree of stewardship, to enable all views to be heard and conclusions to be based on reasoned arguments, consensus, or compromise. This is the essential role of the chair/chairman and speaker of the council.

### Effective chairing is important because it can:

- **Provide for clear leadership and direction** – ensuring that discussions are held within some framework for debate, i.e. based on an agreed agenda and adhering to established ground rules, standing orders, or protocols for how the business should be conducted.
- **Ensure that debates are focused and balanced** – involving discussion from all of those who wish to articulate a view, particularly where conflicting viewpoints are being expressed.

- **Enable decisions to be reached** – allowing participants to agree on the way forward and any further action that needs to be taken, e.g. for the allocation of resources to meet agreed priorities.
- **Contribute to group or team working** – allowing people to build rapport and contribute to group/committee discussions. This can often help to inform, unite and inspire people.
- **Ensure that resources are used to best effect** – saving time and energy and allowing information, views, and evidence to be gathered in an efficient and timely manner.

## Functions of a Chairperson during meetings

Any chairperson has two main roles:

- **To ensure that discussions are carried out following the laws** and procedural rules.
- **To make sure that meetings are run effectively and inclusively**, in line with any agreed agenda, to deal with the business at hand. This will include preparation and follow-up, as well as taking charge during the meeting itself.



### **Activity 1: Your recent experience of chairing meetings**

Think about any recent meetings you have attended which were chaired by other people.

Write down a list of some of the positive and negative ways that the chairpersons in these meetings attempted to manage the discussions.

## The key roles of a chairperson

There are no hard and fast rules about how you chair a meeting. The approach you take and the style you adopt will depend largely on the nature of the meeting, the people involved, and your personality. That aside, there are some key roles that most chairs/chairmen adopt:

- **The spokesperson** – summing up other people’s views and being comfortable to put these across to all kinds of people, including large groups.
- **The organizer** – making sure that everyone is prepared for meetings and knows when and where they are going to be and what is going to be discussed. For most formal committee meetings, the mechanics of this will be undertaken by the council officers.
- **The communicator** – making sure that everyone understands what is going on before, during, and after the meeting.
- **The action person** – making sure that meetings are not just a ‘talking shop’ but have a purpose and result in action.
- **The mediator** – sometimes finding a compromise between two people or two conflicting ideas - is fair and not letting your feelings get in the way.

Sometimes these roles can be delegated to others, although it is important to recognize that the chair/chairman will retain the overall responsibility. For example, if you are not the world’s most efficient organizer, you may prefer to work closely with your vice-chair or one of the council’s officers in ensuring that all of the practical arrangements for running meetings are covered effectively.

## Chairing public and informal meetings

These types of meetings involve a degree of planning for success. For example thinking about the venue, timing, invitees, advertising, etc.

The nature of these meetings may require you to modify your approach:

- **Set tone and style** – some meetings may be better held in settings outside of council buildings to reduce the perceived ‘formality’ of the discussions. It may also be advisable to chair the meeting in a more relaxed style, e.g. allowing people to talk to, question, and challenge others without going ‘through the chair/chairman’.
- Encourage contributions – discussing and deciding things ‘by committee’ may work well for much of the council’s business, but may hinder group discussions elsewhere. It may be useful to think about breaking a large gathering into smaller task groups to enable more people to contribute or to find other ways to maximize the inputs from those attending.
- **Reach decisions** – not everyone will be comfortable committing to decisions arrived at in a group meeting, e.g. some people will need time to think through the actions proposed or may need to seek approval from the people they represent before signing up. As chair/chairman, you will need to manage people’s expectations about what is realistic and achievable.
- Act as a facilitator – at some meetings you will be required to act as a facilitator where there are one or more opposing views, in your role as a community leader or representative. This may require particular skills of tact, diplomacy, and ‘neutrality’ where you are chairing the process as opposed to giving your opinions on the issues being discussed

## Mechanics of chairing meetings

Before the meeting	During the meeting	After the meeting
Clarify the meeting's objectives.	Create a good impression-welcome people and clarify roles and responsibilities.	Summarize the key points – who will do what, by when.
Ensure that the right people are invited to attend.	Focus on what the meeting must achieve and gain commitment to the agenda.	Ensure that the minutes of the meeting record key agreements, facts, opinions, or quotes.
Ensure that all necessary documents are produced.	Establish the ground rules.	Agree on details and timing of next meeting/s.
Check the venue is suitably set out.	Steer discussions in a structured way – manage the time and the personalities.	Thank everyone for their contribution.
Develop some contingency plans for non-attendance.	Encourage a wide variety of views and opinions.	Ensure that follow-up takes place – i.e. progress on agreed action points.
Prepare yourself – mentally and physically.		
		Make sure the 'important' people are kept informed.

## Encouraging participation and open discussions during meetings

As a chairperson of any meeting, one of your most important tasks during the meeting is to encourage participation and prompt discussion. In all meetings, consider it is important that you observe the following;

- Are there only one or two main contributors to most debates?
- Are there noticeably silent people in the group?
- Does there look to be a rigid 'contribution hierarchy', where some people are reluctant to speak unless others have done so?
- Is there a gender bias or any other form of cultural bias?
- Does more than one person talk at once and do others appear not to listen?

If the answer to any of these is 'yes', you might like to consider the two main ways in which you can encourage greater participation:

- ask open and searching questions– probing, testing, and challenging others through questioning to enable you to gather information and get to the nub of any issue under discussion.
- listen actively – encouraging people to speak through 'active listening', i.e. using nods, eye contact, silence, smiles, and comments to prompt others to share their views.

## Hints and tips for Effective questioning

To prompt discussion you can use a range of techniques:

**Closed questions** – direct questions that require a one-word answer, e.g. 'yes' or 'no'.

**Open questions** – the 'how', 'why' and 'what' type of questions that require a more expansive response.

**Leading/limiting questions** – questions designed to limit the range of possible answers, e.g. 'Is it true that....?'

**Soft commands** – prompts that sound like questions to elicit information, e.g. 'Perhaps you could explain...'

**Paraphrasing/summarizing** – repeating what you have heard and asking for clarification.

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- Closed questions – direct questions that require a one-word answer, e.g. 'yes' or 'no'.
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- Leading/limiting questions – questions designed to limit the range of possible answers, e.g. 'Is it true that...?'
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- Paraphrasing/summarizing – repeating what you have heard and asking for clarification.



## Activity 2: Preparing your questions before the meeting

### Case study - curbing the cutting down of Shea trees

A truck was stopped at a police check point in your sub-county and it was filled up with charcoal made from felled Shea tree logs. A month earlier, your council had passed a by-law prohibiting the cutting down and selling of charcoal from Shea trees. Imagine you have been asked to chair a meeting to discuss the issues of what should be done to the culprits in your council. Identify any questions you would want to raise at the meeting.

## Dealing with different personalities while chairing meetings

Chairing council meetings can sometimes be a demanding process because of the personalities involved. People respond in different, sometimes unpredictable, ways when trying to convince others of their point of view – particularly when this is overlaid with the essential politics of local government. Arguments are common and conflict is not unusual. This is true enough in one-to-one situations but is particularly so in group meetings. Several psychologists have put forward theories of ‘group dynamics’ to explain this phenomenon.

A basic appreciation of how ‘group dynamics’ works is useful in understanding how groups of people tend to behave when brought together on a shared task or activity. This can have a big impact on your ability to chair meetings effectively. To understand group dynamics, let us look at the classical works of D.W Tuckman who in 1965 postulated his theory<sup>1</sup> of ‘group dynamics’. He

<sup>1</sup> Tuckman, D.W. Developmental Sequence in Small Groups, Psychological Bulletin 1965, 63(6) 284-299

observed that different groups of people tend to go through a similar lifecycle of stages in working together.

**Forming** – coming together as a group, finding out about each other, deciding what the group’s concerns and emphases should be.

**Storming** – coming to terms with differences within the group.

**Norming** – agreeing on objectives, priorities, procedures, and ways of relating to each other.

**Performing** – getting on with the work, without having to spend a lot of time and energy deciding what needs doing and how it should be done.

## Why should you analyze group dynamics while chairing meetings?

Recognizing that people often behave differently in groups can help you, tactically, to be more effective in chairing meetings. Much of this is about watching and listening to group behavior and exercising your judgment about when to intervene and when to sit back as discussions unfold and people exchange views or come into conflict.

### *For example:*

- Who contributes the most and least to group discussions – are they aware of it and could you challenge them?
- Who are the silent people – is their silence about dissent or fear and could your intervention encourage them to be more vocal?
- What is the atmosphere in the group – could you mediate to create more congenial conditions?

- Have the discussions reached a sticking point – could you broker some negotiation or compromise to move things forward?
- Does anybody impose their decisions on others – could you ask for a secret ballot to prevent this?
- Who are the rebels, bullies, critics, and scapegoats – can you employ different tactics to deal with each?



### **Activity 3: Dealing with the personalities - Identity what tactics you would employ to deal with each:**

- A noisy and aggressive councilor who insists on shouting people down when they disagree with him?
- A persistently quiet councilor who looks attentive but rarely says anything without being prompted?
- A councilor who tends to be long-winded in sharing her thoughts with the group to the agitation of others?

# 3. Resolving Community Conflicts

## Resolving community conflicts

This workbook intended is intended to help councilors become conflict resolution experts. When any conflict emerges within the community, the area councilors and local leaders must have appropriate skills and knowledge to be able to provide a satisfactory response to the challenge. The workbook recognizes that one of the major constitutionally mandated roles of local councilors is to resolve conflict, promote peace and security as articulated Section in the Local Government Act 1999.

## What is community conflict?

Community conflict<sup>2</sup> can occur within your village at any time. For example, it could be an inter-clan dispute of land boundaries. It can begin as a small quarrel over how long the land boundaries should extend and then it can easily escalate into fights and even deaths. Elsewhere, there may be scuffle overutilization and management of shared resources such as water points. A family/household might not be interested to contribute to the management of such resources and yet they would like to have similar rights of access to them. This can easily annoy other households who are contributing either money or labor or both to manage the resource. When not managed well, this can quite easily erupt and escalate into a community conflict with its devastating impacts on the people.

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2 [www.tedcandle.co.uk/publications/033%20Tension%20monitoring%20guidance%20iCoCo%202010.pdf](http://www.tedcandle.co.uk/publications/033%20Tension%20monitoring%20guidance%20iCoCo%202010.pdf)

'Tension Monitoring Toolkit', Institute of Community Cohesion

[www.tedcandle.co.uk/publications/033%20Tension%20monitoring%20guidance%20iCoCo%202010.pdf](http://www.tedcandle.co.uk/publications/033%20Tension%20monitoring%20guidance%20iCoCo%202010.pdf)

'Dispute Resolution Toolkit', Housing Ombudsman Service/Housing Corporation

As community leaders, councilors should take time to understand their local communities and play key roles to ensure such community conflicts are prevented and in case they happen, a quick and amicable solution must be found. As a leader, you must invest time to understand the root causes of the conflict and where people are coming from because this is the first step in helping to prevent and mediate community conflicts.

And as this workbook will demonstrate, there are many tactics, approaches, and strategies you can adopt in resolving disputes between local people before they can escalate into disorder or even violence.

## Recognizing and preventing conflict

As a councilor, you must understand that your community will contain groups of people whose views, and the articulation of these, may frequently differ and be in conflict. It may also be difficult to get different people to reach a consensus on some issues where opinions are deeply entrenched.

Added to this, individuals and groups may hold different assumptions about problems, solutions, or potential courses of action and will seek different types of information to support their case or cause. This is not necessarily a problem, but the reality of living in a democratic society.

## Creating necessary conditions for solving conflict

Most conflicts can be prevented or resolved if the following conditions are in place:

- people are prepared to listen first and talk and/or act second
- everyone's contribution to a debate or discussion is respected and valued
- those in dispute are willing to amend their viewpoint in the light of others' suggestions

- questions are used positively to encourage others to elaborate on their thoughts
- Those involved look to build on ideas and identify areas of common ground from which to build rapport.

## Complex Situations in which conflict is difficult to resolve:

- where people are only interested in giving their views and are not willing to listen to others
- individuals talk as if there is only one course of action
- any discussion is punctuated with threatened or actual aggression/violence
- questions are used to attack and undermine others
- discussion and debate is used only to 'score points'
- There is no willingness or attempt to identify areas of common ground.



### Activity 1: preventing conflict in a PTA meeting

Imagine you are faced with the following situation. What could you do to prevent the dispute from escalating into a damaging community conflict?

You have been invited to chair a PTA meeting in the community school to discuss whether to construct a classroom or a teachers' house with the funds provided by the government. Majority of the teachers have higher preference for construction of their house while the school has very few classrooms which do not accommodate all the learners. Soon, tensions started rising between the parents and the teachers.

*How would you best use your facilitation and conflict resolution skills to prevent an escalation of tensions?*



## Activity 2: Understanding the sources of conflict

The parents of Acane Primary school have stormed the head teacher's office blaming him for a persistent underperformance of his school in Primary Leaving Examinations. At the same time, the head teacher also accused the parents for not supporting the school to improve academic performance of their children. As it that was not enough, all the teachers from the staff room stormed out and accused both the parents and the head teacher of not supporting to teach the pupils.

*Assuming you are the LC1 Chairperson of Acane village, what would you do to find a peaceful resolution between the parents, teachers, and the head teacher?*

## Bringing people together to resolve a conflict

Managing any conflicts that have arisen will require you to share information about what has occurred and make efforts to bring people together for some form of resolution. If trust has not broken down completely and the conflict has not yet got out of hand, there is obvious merit in bringing together the widest range of interested groups at a public meeting.

Having brought people together, it is likely that in the first instance people will want to raise their concerns and may be initially reluctant to move too quickly to discuss what should be done to address them. There is some value in letting people air their differences, but only if the discussion is managed to prevent tempers flaring and getting out of hand.

It may be that in a first meeting, the best outcome you can hope for is to get people to agree to meet and talk again. In this sense, the meeting should be seen as the start of conflict

resolution and not an end in itself. Your role as a facilitator will be crucial in helping people to resolve their difficulties.

## Tactics that can help bring people together to solve a conflict;

- Setting a positive tone and modeling the 'norms' for group interaction
- Being yourself, without defensiveness or hidden agendas, and sharing your experiences and feelings to establish empathy
- Describing what you see rather than being judgmental, e.g. "based on what you've said, you don't look to be supportive..."
- Being empathetic – showing you understand people's situation, needs and feelings, i.e. trying not to give advice, judgments, or interpretations.

## Resolving conflicts

- Maintaining your assertiveness, but avoiding displays of unnecessary emotion (weakness or aggression) and unhelpful behaviors such as irritators (e.g. "I think what he has said is very reasonable"), immediate counter-attacks, and talking over the top of people.
- Keeping people and problems separate, i.e. recognize that in many cases other people are not just 'being difficult' – real and valid differences can lie behind conflicting positions. By separating the problem from the person, real issues can be debated without damaging relationships.
- Encouraging people to explore options together and be open to the idea that a 'third way' may exist.
- Listening first and talking second – to facilitate any form of resolution, you must first understand where different people are coming from.

- Focusing on getting the support of the ‘early adopters’, i.e. there will usually be a proportion of people in any group who are open to new ideas or new ways of doing things. Their support can often be influential in encouraging the more resistant to come forward, over time, in support of a resolution.

## Key considerations for a conflict resolution

A lot of preparation is required before the actual day of the meeting, namely;

- a. Ensuring that all interested parties are invited, clarifying the purpose of the meeting,
- b. On the day of the meeting, ensure that the sitting arrangement is conducive to open discussion.
- c. Your role in setting the right tone for the meeting will be vital. Perhaps you could give a short introduction, setting out the various concerns (without being judgmental) and emphasizing that you are keen to explore areas of common ground.
- d. As the discussions unfold, you will need to use your facilitation skills in encouraging good debate, marginalizing unhelpful contributions/ behavior, and building trust and rapport with those present.
- e. Concentrating on building the dialogue, trust, and confidence of the group may well be more important than trying to resolve their difficulties in one quick hit.
- f. Get those involved in different sides of a dispute to agree on areas of common ground.
- g. Understanding the idea of finding mutually acceptable solutions may be a completely new experience for them – particularly if the dispute has a long history and opinions are suitably entrenched.

## How questioning helps during conflict resolution

Having planned the meeting and helped to set the tone and style of the ensuing discussions, your key tasks are to manage the debate and use a suitable questioning approach to probe, test and challenge others to get to the nub of the issues in dispute. In this respect, questioning is a powerful and essential tool, enabling you to:

- get to the ‘heart of the matter’
- gather evidence and clarify and expand on initial views or early information
- elicit information without making respondents feel intimidated or prejudged
- Facilitate inclusion, buy-in, and ownership of problems and build rapport with people.

## Other facilitation tactics will help in achieving a ‘win-win’ resolution

- questioning rather than talking
- listening instead of interrupting
- summarizing rather than diluting arguments
- identifying and building on common ground as opposed to point-scoring, attacking or blaming
- emphasizing areas of agreement instead of areas of dispute
- building on ideas rather than continuous counter proposals
- describing your feelings in preference to the use of irritators, e.g. ‘with respect’ and ‘frankly’ etc.

## Last steps during a conflict resolution meeting

- Summarize what has been resolved. This ensures that everyone is made aware of what has been discussed and what is being proposed.
- At this stage, it may be appropriate to 'park' certain issues that the meeting has failed to agree on so that these do not scupper an agreement on the more substantive points under discussion.
- Suggest a way forward and action after the meeting.
- Wherever possible you should follow up the meeting with a written summary of the resolved matters so that everyone remains clear about the way forward.
- In some cases, this may be best done by drawing up a formal 'resolution agreement'.

## The use of mediation

In most cases – as a community leader – you will be ideally placed to act as the facilitator in resolving community conflicts. However, there may well be situations where the nature of the dispute, the problems faced, or the personalities involved make your involvement inappropriate or inadvisable. In these situations, you should consider the use of an independent mediator.

Mediation has been used with varying degrees of success in many different kinds of conflict, including; interpersonal, family, industrial relations, community, environmental and international disputes. Mediation involves interviewing all interested parties individually before bringing representatives of the opposing groups together to move the situation forward and find a resolution. In most cases, a trained and experienced mediator is the key to success.

## Preventing future conflict

In your day-to-day role as a councilor, there are many ways in which you can work to prevent disputes from developing into wider community conflicts. They include;

- Monitoring many of the factors in your ward that may allow conflict to breed (e.g. environmental degradation, unemployment, weakening community bonds/ties, crime, and anti-social behavior) and ensuring that action is taken to address these wherever possible.
- Providing reassurance to those who may be vulnerable and unable to speak up for themselves.
- Ensuring that partner agencies take action against individuals who threaten the well-being of the area and may provoke community conflict.
- Helping to build coalitions between different community groups, voluntary sector agencies, and statutory organizations to strengthen community ties, build trust and develop social capital.

## 4. Ensuring Effective Local Planning

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### Planning: What for?

If you think about planning, what word(s) come into your mind? To some councilors, planning is exciting and visionary. It is about improving the environment, making places and communities work, a way of securing tangible improvements and investments, shaping the future, and a mechanism for getting involved in decisions on things that matter to people. To others, it is bureaucratic, confrontational, stifles creativity, and takes too much time. After all, we face many problems at the moment. Why plan to solve them later? Unfortunately, it doesn't matter whether you like it or not. It is just part and parcel of your role and responsibility as a local councilor. The Local Government plans, planning proposals, and decisions are crucial facets for ensuring service delivery and better local governance. This workbook will help you to understand how the planning system in Uganda works and why it is important to be a local councilor who appreciates the value of effective planning.

### A Local Development Plan

Local development planning is about making places livable and prosperous, developing our communities, and shaping the future of where we live. It plays a critical role in identifying what development is needed and where, what areas need to be protected or enhanced, and in assessing whether the proposed development is suitable. Development planning is about upholding the wider public interest for the benefit of the whole community and not just individual constituents or particular interests. There are three main aspects to the planning system:

- a) **Plan-making** (preparing local development plans)
- b) **Development management** (dealing with planning applications, proactively managing development)
- c) **Enforcement, monitoring, and evaluation** (monitoring how policies and developments are being implemented, including enforcement against breaches of planning).

## Decentralized planning in Uganda

The local government administers much of the planning system. District councils are responsible for most planning matters. The Government wants to see planning decisions taken at the lowest level possible and has introduced the ability for village, parish, sub-counties, and town councils to produce development plans which, once in force, form part of the policies used to make decisions on applications. Development Plans are a legal requirement for all higher and lower local governments in Uganda. Section 35 of the Local government Act (Cap 243) requires district councils to prepare comprehensive and integrated development plans incorporating plans of lower local governments. The same section also obliges lower local governments to prepare development plans incorporating plans of lower local councils in their respective areas of jurisdiction. Development plans, therefore, form a basic tool for the implementation of decentralized development programs and services by government and non-government actors in local governments.

In addition, local government plans are key instruments that support the national development management processes in Uganda. As required by article 190 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995, local government development plans are supposed to inform the National Development Plan (NDP). The NDP is strengthened by The NPA Act 2002 which created the National Planning Authority (NPA) which is mandated to support national planning. Local government development plans are the main modality through which strategies and activities of the NDP are cascaded to the levels where citizens can participate and benefit from them.

## The Comprehensive National Development Planning Framework (CNDPF)

In 2007, the Government of Uganda adopted the Comprehensive National Development Planning Framework (CNDPF) which outlines the principles and guidelines to be followed in developing national and decentralized long and medium-term development plans in the context or perspective of a shared National Vision. The main Purpose of the CNDPF is to provide a holistic framework for a coherent system of National Development Planning where short-term interventions and activities are guided by long-term development aspirations and objectives contained in various sets of cascading development plans.

### Local Government Development Plans

At the Local Government level, the Local Government Act places the primary responsibilities for development planning to the higher local governments and lower local governments. Currently, the local Government Act calls for development plans to be produced at the district, Municipal, Town council Division and sub-county levels of local government. However, by emphasizing the involvement of local administrative units, CSOs, private sector organizations, and community members in the local government planning process, the Local Government Act obliges the local government planning process to be a participatory one. The 1995 Constitution of Uganda stipulates a decentralized local government planning approach where the needs and aspirations of the people are supposed to determine how governmental units at the local level do allocate and use public resources for development and service delivery.

There is a close relationship between Local Government Development Plans and Sector Development plans. For example, a very big proportion of the financing of Local government development plans is through conditional grants channeled via sector investment plans (roads, water, Sanitation, Education, Health, Community Services, etc.).

Hence, the development priorities, policies, and strategies in the SDPs exert a big influence on priorities and strategies that can be selected by local government plans.

In addition to the Sector Development Plans, the 5-Year National Development Plans are delivered through the 5-Year Local Government Development Plans. Therefore the Local Government Development Plans must be consistent with the long and medium-term national development goals and objectives and strategic direction of the country as stipulated in the 30-year National Vision, the 10-year and the 5-year NDPs.



Source: Henry H.Kellam/UN-DESA

## Projects as Units of Local Development Planning

Local development planning is usually conceptualized in terms of projects. But what is a project?

### What is a Project?

A project involves a set of different, interrelated activities that need to be coordinated and managed to achieve a specified objective. If there are many projects aimed at contributing to the same development goal and being implemented concurrently, they are referred to collectively as a programme. As the first step in a planning framework, the planner will be required to clearly, and carefully define what projects to include in a development programme. Such projects should aim at maximizing benefits if they are implemented together.

### Other key features of a project include;

- A project involves the investment of scarce resources in the expectation of future benefit.
- A project has a specific starting and finishing time in which a clearly defined set of objectives are expected to be achieved. Usually, the achievement of those objectives can be measured.
- A project has a conceptual boundary, usually geographical but sometimes organizational.
- The project must be able to generate more benefits than costs that go into it.
- The project must have provisions for future sustainability.

## Levels of Projects

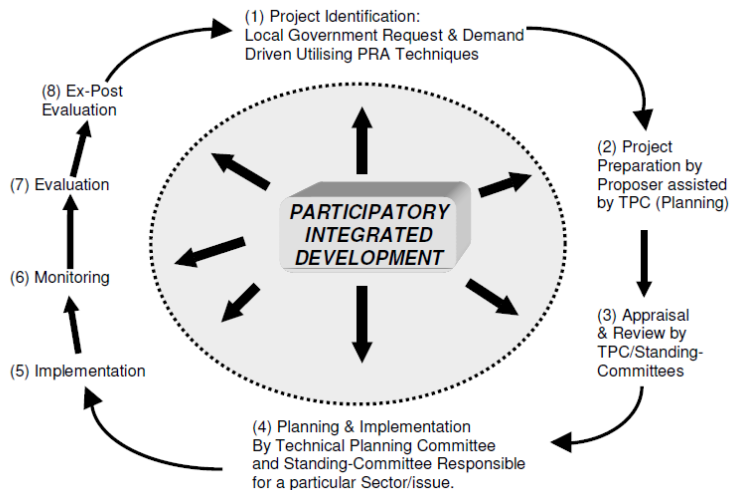
Projects can be generated at several levels within the Local Government system. For example, a Village Council can put up a project for the protection of a water spring; the Sub-county can propose a project for a dispensary, primary school, construction of a feeder road while the District Council can propose an office block, housing estate. Projects, as generated at each level of Local Government, should be funded from resources available locally. Two or more local councils are encouraged to identify and fund projects jointly. Where necessary, additional resources can be requested from a higher level of local government.

## Project Cycle

The project cycle approach provides a systematic approach to the identification, preparation, implementation, monitoring, review and evaluation of projects. Underlying this approach is a basic philosophy, with

the following elements:

- Define the objectives
- Gather all the relevant information
- Identify the apparent best solution
- Consider all possible alternatives
- Decide on the course of action



**Project Identification:** This stage involves the development of the concept of the project, the definition of its objectives, and consideration of possible ways of achieving these objectives. Ideally, the local communities are involved

in identifying their problems through a participatory integrated process. The idea for a project may originate in a number of ways for example:

- From deficiencies in the levels of service or infrastructure from Local Government Councils.
- From a political demand to address a particular problem.
- From a sector review or study which identifies some new or complementary areas of investment.
- From local communities, private sector interests, and NGOs.
- The Local Council system will be the best channel for collecting ideas from the beneficiaries.
- From technical officials in the various local governments. Their ideas would be the result of an experi-

ence in implementing local projects as well as their interaction with the beneficiaries.

- From external support agencies (ESAs)/donors, Non-Government Organisations (NGOs), and other interest groups working in the Local Government.
- From the Central Government. The Central Government may be interested in projects that encompass several districts or that may be of interest at the national level. Such project ideas may be in the area of environmental protection, poverty reduction, promotion of tourism, etc.

**Project Screening and Selection:** This stage will involve the setting of priority projects for inclusion in the Local Development Plan. Projects should be reviewed against the development priorities of the local government as well as available funds.

## Project Preparation

This stage of the project is undertaken once the concept of the project has been screened and the decision made by the respective council on whether it merits further consideration. The project is then designed, alternatives considered; and technical, social-economic, and financial feasibility is established.

## Project Implementation

This stage of the project begins once the respective Local Council has approved the finance for the project. It is about the execution of a series of activities related to the project.

## Project Monitoring and Evaluation

This stage of the project is concerned with measuring the attainment of the project's objectives and its wider socio-economic impact. Project evaluation may be carried out at a specific point in time chosen to reflect the fact that the

project has been fully operational for a certain amount of time. Monitoring is the system set up for the project manager to ensure that projects are going ahead as planned.

## Why doing consultation relevant for local development planning

Consultations and data collection will take place concurrently at all levels (district, municipal, sub-county/town council/division, parish/ward, and village/cell) beginning in the eighth month of the fourth year of the District Development Plan implementation.

To facilitate evidence-based planning and informed discussions during consultations, Local Governments should seek to understand:

- The prevailing physical, social, and economic characteristics of a Local Government;
- Sector development situations focusing on opportunities and potentials for wealth creation and local economic development by each sector.

## Key participants during consultation

While consulting engage all the various groups of people or organizations (stakeholders) that might have some interest in the project:

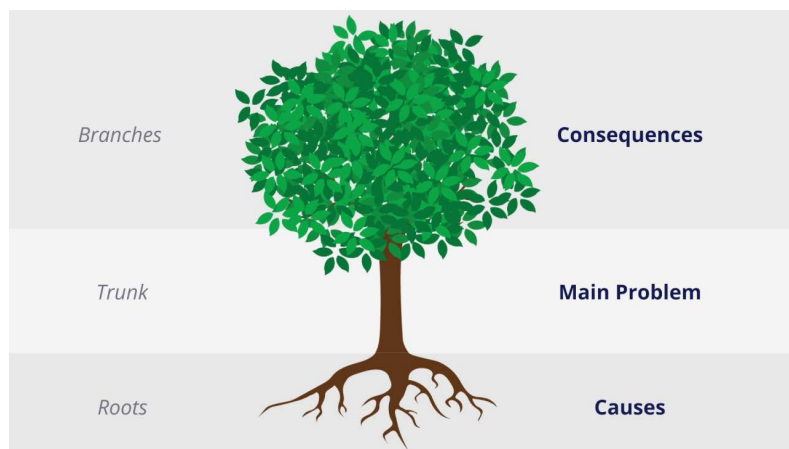
- The target group or beneficiaries
- The implementing groups
- Other groups with an interest in the project (in favor or against)
- Those groups who might be financing the project

## How Councilors can analyze local problems

The identification of the wrong problem will produce the

wrong solution. There are three basic rules:

- Problems are best analyzed when specifically stated in the negative - and not vague. For example, it is always better to state that there is no drinking water in Celea, a village of 200 households than to state that the water supply is unsatisfactory.
- The central issue should be identified and stated clearly. If the problem as stated were solved, would there still be a problem?
- There must be some consensus that there is a problem. It is frequently helpful to illustrate problems as such of communities showing the causes of the problem above it and the consequences below it. This is known as a problem tree as briefly illustrated below:



## Guidance of Parish/Ward and Community Level Planning Processes

Parish/village and community level participation can be channeled via the following mechanisms:

- Designing and circulating planning calendar/ schedule to be followed in the parish/ward and community planning processes.

- Training parish/ward and community level planning facilitators (parish chief/town agent, LC1 personnel, PDC members, CBO representatives, etc.) in the LG planning processes.
- Circulating information regarding the national, local government development priorities and strategic directions to the parish/ward and community levels actors.
- Facilitating community and parish/ward level planning forums by members of the LLG planning task teams to discuss community and parish level development constraints/ issues, potentials, opportunities, and aspirations (including advising parish/ward planning forums on how to amalgamate and rank community development aspirations).

## Approval of Respective Local Government Development Plans

Approval of Lower Local Government plans will be done by the respective council within a formal meeting following the legal procedures stipulated in the council procedures, rules, and regulations. Before the council approves the plan, the following plan discussions must take place;

- Discussion of the draft plan by the Executive committee
- Laying the draft plan before the council by the secretary responsible for finance and /or planning functions
- Council refers the draft plan to the council standing committee for review
- Discussion of final amalgamated draft plan Executive committee.

Presentation of the final draft plan for council approval will be done by the secretary responsible for finance and/ or planning function at executive committees. It is a requirement that councilors receive the draft plan at least one week before the meeting to study it and generate issues for consideration in the council meeting.

## Upon council approval of the final draft plan:

- The planning Unit/planning focal office will incorporate any changes recommended by the council in its approval meeting;
- The Town clerk/ Assistant Town clerk/Sub-country chief will present the draft to the executive committee for a final check to ensure that council recommendations have been incorporated
- The Chairperson of the council and the Town clerk/Assistant town clerk/ Sub-county chief will sign the development plan and sanction it for printing and dissemination.

## Planning tasks at the parish level

At the Parish level, the structures that play major roles in the LGDP process include; the Parish/ ward Council; the Parish/ward Executive Committee; and the Parish /Ward Development Committee. They can play the following tasks;

- Participating in popularizing the national vision, national strategic direction, and relevant cross-cutting issues
- Analysis of the potentials, opportunities, challenges, and general development constraints faced by the parish/ward
- Holding parish/ward planning meetings to discuss parish development situations attended by parish/ward council members, Development Committee members, representatives of community groups, religious organizations, government service institutions, private sector organizations, NGOs working in the area, etc.
- Receiving and debating development aspirations from the community levels and synthesizing them into a single list of development issues for submission to LLGs and division for consideration.

- Ensuring timely compliance to the LGDP planning processes by all stakeholders in the parish/ward
- Mobilizing people to participate in the planning process and implementation of LGDP activities
- Providing information on service delivery, transparency and accountability, and challenges and gaps in service delivery at the community level.
- Monitoring LGDP activities' progress

## Role of Councilors in local planning

### **Councilors play a key role in planning by:**

- Make sure that local people are involved in planning, by acting as a liaison between communities and the council and raising local issues, and helping residents to understand what the council is doing.
- By helping to set the direction of planning policy.
- By being a decision-maker on the planning committee.
- Helping to set the vision and culture within the planning service, and working with local government authority.
- Participating in popularizing the national vision, national strategic direction, and relevant crosscutting issues.
- Identifying general development issues, potentials, constraints, and challenges facing the village/cell.
- Organizing and participating in community planning meetings to discuss village/ cell development situations. The planning meetings at the village/cell levels are to be attended by all adult people living in the village/cell; representatives of community groups, religious organizations, government service institutions, private sector organizations, NGOs working in the area, etc.

- Ensuring timely compliance to the local planning processes by all stakeholders in the village/cell
- Mobilizing people to participate in the planning process and implementation of LGDP activities
- Providing information on service delivery, transparency and accountability, and challenges and gaps in service delivery at the community level.

## Local Planning: Key lessons

- Producing Local Development Plans should be a collaborative exercise, led by the sub-county planning authority but in collaboration with local community members. Planning policies are developed through a process that involves setting a vision, gathering and reviewing evidence, developing and consulting on different options, and assessing the plan against a series of national and global criteria for sustainability.
- The plan must be supported by a robust evidence base, which could include information on flood risk, viability, tourism, employment, travel patterns, retail, etc. It will also involve studies of what public land is available for supporting government infrastructural and industrial developments.
- Producing Local Development Plans requires close working between officers and councilors, often led by a member-level committee.
- Plan making can be complex (sometimes unnecessarily so) and expensive. Your input and involvement in helping to involve the community throughout the process will be important.
- Sometimes there will be difficult decisions (and possibly unpopular) and trade-offs to be made. For example, how will infrastructure be funded? Levying local taxes, etc.

## Key planning elements

Local councilors should strive to ensure that the plan is;

- **Positively prepared** – the plan should be based on a strategy that tries to meet the needs of the area in a way that will achieve sustainable development
- **Justified** – the plan should be the most appropriate strategy when compared with reasonable alternatives
- **Effective** – the plan should be deliverable over its period.
- **Consistent** – is the plan in sync with the national development plan

## Hints and tips: Tips for being a councilor who plans effectively

- Be prepared (read various documents such as the national development, previous development plans, relevant local government reports, among others).
- Be aware of the need for probity and the public perception of your actions (declare interests if necessary).
- Be focused: focus on the evidence and precisely how where and why you agree or disagree with officer assessment.
- Know the thrust of policies in the NDP, your Local Development Plan
- Stick to policies and material considerations.
- If you are unclear or have questions ask other councilors/experts.

## Resources

NPA (2014). The Local Government Development Planning Guidelines

Kellam, H (2014). Guide to decentralized District Planning in Uganda

## 5. Strengthening Climate Action at the Local Level

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Action to cut carbon and increase resilience is one of the most important global actions required by all actors across the board – including politicians. This is because climate change is one of the biggest challenges facing the entire world at the moment. Therefore, any councilor who cares about the progress and future of their constituencies must not only care about climate action – but also quickly act to fight climate change.

In Uganda, climate change is the leading cause of crop failures due to prolonged drought and occasional floods which destroy crops. Slum-dwellers in cities like Kampala are also significantly affected by floods – which destroy both properties and lives. Worst still, carbon emissions due to the increasing number of vehicles and industries in the urban area are making taking action against the changing climate a lot harder. Most importantly, climate action also comes with enormous opportunities such creation of clean jobs. So what can councilors do to fight climate change whilst increasing economic opportunities through climate action?

### What is the role of councils?

Councils have an important **leadership role** in creating low carbon and climate-resilient communities. Individual councilors also have an important leadership role. This role includes:

- Offering vision and direction to local groups, and building support for that vision

- Identifying and advocating opportunities to mainstream ownership and responsibility for climate action across the council
- Participation in plan-making and decisions on climate action
- Representing local level concerns and perspectives to the council and other important local organizations
- Encouraging and empowering residents and businesses to participate and act
- Brokering agreements between different interests and partners, working across sectors to facilitate and encourage coordinated action.



### **Activity: Reflect on these questions about climate action**

- What are the opportunities for showing leadership on climate action in your council area?
- What village-level priorities could council action to create low-carbon, climate-resilient communities help address?
- What local organizations can you work with to help realize opportunities within your ward?
- What obstacles to action are there? How can they be overcome?
- What questions should I ask of my council decision-makers to help achieve change?

# What are the opportunities for climate action?

## Economy

Councils can work in a wide variety of ways to support the growth of a low carbon economy and ensure that businesses are less vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, delivering huge economic, social, and environmental benefits.

## Key opportunities include:

- Supporting local economic growth through the development of a low carbon economic strategy that identifies local opportunities and supports the development of local jobs, knowledge, and infrastructure
- Helping local businesses to cut costs and increase competitiveness by working with them to cut energy, water and resource use
- Boosting local employment by ensuring that practical training opportunities are provided in technical colleges.



### Activity: How will your local economy be affected by the changing climate?

- How can the council improve local resilience and support local businesses to plan for extreme weather? What are the strengths, opportunities, and natural advantages for developing the low carbon sector in your ward and the wider local area? What could you do to support low carbon activity in your ward?

## National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003

Protecting and conserving the environment helps to reduce flood and drought risk but also improve water quality and enhance livelihood alternatives of the people in your village, parish, or sub-county.

As a councilor, the **National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003** empowers you to take the following actions;

### a) *Protecting forest reserves*

The law protects forest reserves so as conserve biological diversity, ecosystems, and habitats; sustainable the potential yield of their economic, social, health, and environmental benefits; conserve natural heritage and promote aesthetic, cultural, and spiritual values.

### b) *Planting more trees*

Contacting responsible agencies such as the National Forestry Authority and/or other NGOs for tree seedlings to either give to your community members or to plant in community/public spaces such as schools, hospitals, parks, etc. Sensitize your community members about the benefits of tree planting, among others.

## National Environment Act, 2003

Furthermore, the National Environmental Act, 2003 empowers you to take the following actions;

- a) Appoint an environmental focal point person in your council/committee.
- b) Be responsible for the management of the environmental and natural resources under your jurisdiction.
- c) Make ordinances, bylaws to regulate various aspects of the environmental and natural resources within your jurisdiction.

- d) Establish a natural resource committee within your constituency.



### **Activity: Impact of climate change**

What impact could the changing climate have on the natural environment in your village, parish, or sub-county?

## **National Climate Change Act, 2021**

In 2021, Uganda enacted the National Climate Change Act to strengthen the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement that was signed by all UN Member States. The law is supposed to provide a regulatory framework for monitoring, reporting, and verifying the impact of climate change and the implementation of programmes on climate change. Again, the law is meant to enhance Uganda's ability to adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change, build climate resilience and develop a mechanism for enhancing low greenhouse gas emissions. The law is also supposed to provide for the institutional framework to coordinate, supervise, regulate and manage all activities related to climate change; and provide for climate change financing.

## **District Climate Change Action Plan**

According to the National Climate Change Act 2021, all districts in Uganda are supposed to have a District Climate Action Plan which provides an assessment of the current and predicted impact of climate change on the area under the jurisdiction of the district. The plan should include, an assessment of the vulnerability impact and the risk of climate change on the areas under the jurisdiction of the district; a statement of the strategies, policies and actions for adaptation to and mitigation of climate change; identify the actions to be undertaken by the district to build resilience to climate change; and (e) indicate the strategy to be adopted to undertake capacity building for the staff of the district and other stakeholders engaged in climate change-related activities.

## Local Government Units responsible for climate change

The Natural Resources Department of a district is designated as the department responsible for climate change matters in the district is mandated to;

- Liaise with the District Environment and Natural Resources Committee and the lower local governments climate change committees on all matters relating to climate change to promote awareness and literacy on climate change.
- Provide technical assistance to the District Environment and Natural Resources Committee and the lower local governments' climate change committees.
- Keep a record of information on climate change and serve as the secretariat to the District Environment and Natural Resources Committee and the lower local government climate change committees.
- Participate in the development of ordinances and by-laws relating to climate change in the district and other lower local governments.

## Lower local government committees responsible for climate change

- A local government shall, on the advice of the District Environment and Natural Resources Committee, appoint lower local government climate change committees responsible for climate change in their local jurisdictions.
- The lower local governments' climate change committees shall be responsible for the implementation of the District Climate Change Action Plan at the municipal, town, division, county, sub-county, parish, and village levels, as the case may be;
- preparing work plans for climate change adaptation and mitigation activities within their local jurisdictions for

purposes of implementing the District Climate Change Action Plan.

- Conducting education and awareness campaigns on climate change within their local jurisdiction.
- Mobilizing the people within their local jurisdiction to implement climate change adaptation and mitigation measures and actions.
- monitoring and evaluating climate change risks, adaptation, and mitigation activities within their local jurisdiction.
- reporting any events or activities which negatively affect or are likely to negatively affect the implementation of climate change adaptation and mitigation actions and measures.
- Carrying out such other duties as may be prescribed by the district council, urban council, sub-county council in consultation with the District Natural Resources Department.

## Litigation on climate change

- A person may apply to the Local Council, Sub-County Court, High Court for relief against the Government, an individual, or a private entity whose action or omission threatens or is likely to threaten efforts towards adaptation to or mitigation of climate change.
- The High Court, Sub-County Court, and Lower Councils Authorities may, in addition to any other orders it may deem appropriate, make orders to prevent, stop or discontinue the act or omission that is the subject of the application.



### Activity: Taking action against environmental degradation

- Imagine an developer starts reclaiming a swamp in your area of jurisdiction for real estates development? What practical action would you take to ensure that such an environmentally disastrous development is stopped?

## A final word

Action to create low carbon and climate-resilient communities can yield significant opportunities for councils and their communities. Coordinated action can help them deliver on a range of local priorities, improving health outcomes, creating jobs, boosting the local economy, and enhancing the natural environment. It is up to individual councilors and councils as a collective to have the vision, commitment, and drive to help the local area realize these benefits and opportunities of climate action in their area.

# 6. Fighting Corruption at the Grassroots

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## Introduction

Every organization whether large or small is at risk from corruption and councils are no exception to this. All councils must protect the public purse and a major part of this is by limiting exposure to fraud and corruption and reducing risk through effective prevention and detection. From affecting service delivery to causing death, the negative consequences of corruption cannot be underestimated. Indeed, by 2020 it was estimated by the State House Anti-Corruption Unit that corruption costs the Ugandan government UGX. 2Tn per year which is money lost and cannot be used to support local communities. As an elected member you have a range of statutory and moral obligations to protect the assets of your authority and you also need to equip yourself with the knowledge to deal with inquiries and questions from residents.

## Forms of corruption

As stated in the Anti-Corruption Act, 2009, corruption includes;

- The solicitation or acceptance, directly or indirectly, by a public official, of any goods of monetary value, or benefits, such as a gift, favor, promise, advantage, or any other form of gratification for himself or herself or another person or entity, in exchange for any act or omission in the performance of his or her public functions;
- The offering or granting, directly or indirectly, to a public official, of any goods of monetary value, or other benefits, such as a gift, favor, promise or advantage or any other form of gratification for himself or herself or another person or entity, in exchange for any act or omis-

sion in the performance of his or her public functions;

- The diversion or use by a public official, for purposes unrelated to those for which they were intended, for his or her benefit or that of a third party, of any movable or immovable property, monies or securities belonging to the State, to an independent agency, or to an individual, which that official has received by virtue of his or her position for purposes of administration, custody or other reasons;
- Indirectly, of any undue advantage to or by any person who directs or works for, in any capacity, a private sector entity, for himself or herself or any other person, for him or her to act, or refrain from acting, in breach of his or her duties;
- The offering, giving, solicitation or acceptance directly or indirectly, or promising of any undue advantage to or by any person who asserts or confirms that he or she can exert any improper influence over the decision-making of any person performing functions in the public or private sector in consideration of the undue advantage, whether the undue advantage is for himself or herself or any other person, as well as the request, receipt or the acceptance of the offer or the promise of the advantage, in consideration of that influence, whether or not the supposed influence leads to the intended result;
- The offering or giving, promising, solicitation or acceptance, directly or the fraudulent acquisition, use or concealment of property derived from any of the acts referred to in this section;
- The participation as a principal, co-principal, agent, instigator, accomplice or accessory after the fact, or in any other manner in the commission or attempted commission of, or in any collaboration or conspiracy to commit, any of the acts referred to in this section;

## Key definitions: Other forms of corruption

Many other 'activities may fall under the overarching definition of corruption and are indeed types of corruption, the most common of these include:

- **Corruption:** The misuse of a person's position to commit offenses, which can include theft, extortion, and several other crimes, including the soliciting of bribes. The defining characteristic of corruption is that it involves collusion between two or more individuals and is often associated with those holding public office.
- **Fraud:** Fraud is any intentional act or omission designed to deceive others, resulting in the victim suffering a loss and/or the perpetrator achieving a gain.
- **Bribery:** The offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting of any item of value, or an advantage to another person, to induce that person to improperly perform a relevant function or activity, or to reward them for improper performance.
- **Theft:** Dishonestly appropriating property belonging to another to permanently deprive that person of it.
- **Money laundering:** The process by which criminals attempt to disguise the original ownership and control of the proceeds of criminal activity by making such proceeds appear to have derived from a legitimate source.
- **Influence Peddling:** A person who does or, omits to do any act in contravention of established principles or procedure as a result of improper influence, for his or her benefit or the benefit of a third party commits an offense.
- **Diversion of public resources:** A person, who converts, transfers, or disposes of public funds for purposes unrelated to that for which the resources were intended, for his or her benefit or the benefit of a third party, commits an offense.

- Nepotism: A person who is the holder of an office does any act in connection with the office to do favors to any person based on blood relations between that person and that other person commits an offense.

## Dangers of corruption

The impact of fraud should never be underestimated. Importantly, corruption leaves the government with less to spend on services for residents and costs taxpayers money. But there are more dangers, namely;

- Loss of working time, with officers putting things right and liaising with police and lawyers
- cost of the investigation and any subsequent court costs
- Reduced or poor service for residents
- Political impacts, maddening the regime in power
- Reputational damage for individuals or the local government as a whole.
- Poor staff morale which leads to poor performance and/or more fraud.

## Overview of Legal provision for fighting corruption in Uganda

### a) *Public Service Standing Orders, 2010*

To fight corruption, Public Service Standing Orders, 2010 that clearly articulates the **code of conduct and ethics of public officials** as follows;

- Be accountable to the public for all the resources under him/her.
- Ensure proper and frugal utilization of funds and value for money
- Safeguard public property/assets entrusted to him/her and ensure that no damage, loss, misappropriation

tion occurs in the process of procurement, storage, utilization, and disposal.

- iv. Adhere to meritocratic and bureaucratic principles in decision-making.

## Tips for adhering to the code of conduct

- Reporting suspicious activity in your locality to your audit or fraud team e.g. subletting or council tax evasion
- Closed questions – direct questions that require a one-word answer, e.g. 'yes' or 'no'.
- Scrutinizing risk registers and challenging if the fraud risks appear to not be well managed.
- Oversight and scrutiny of budgets, especially in high-risk areas
- ensuring you declare any interests if you sit on committees such as planning
- Monitoring performance of your audit or fraud team with regard to detection and prevention of corruption.
- Supporting the principles of good governance, and supporting an anti-fraud culture across the council, including whistleblowing.
- Supporting the publicizing of successful prosecutions by your council to act as a deterrent and perhaps providing quotes to the press if appropriate.

### b) **National Audit Act, 2008**

The Act provides for audits that can be undertaken by the Auditor General and these include the following;

- i. Audit of public accounts of public entities
- ii. Value for money audits
- iii. Special audits
- iv. Other audits – e.g. gender and environmental audits, among others.

## National Leadership Code Act, 2002

The Act provides for the minimum standard of behavior and conduct of leaders. It sets the requirements for leaders to declare their incomes, assets, and liabilities and puts in place enforcement mechanisms for upholding the standards, behaviors, and conduct of leaders. The Act fights corruption by allowing elected leaders and public servants/officials to;

- i. Declare their conflict of interest when dealing with matters in which he/she or their immediate family are involved.
- ii. Protect and preserve the public property under his/her personal use and shall not use such property or allow its use for any other purpose other than the authorized purposes.
- iii. Protect relevant public information from being used or accessed for private interests.
- iv. Be punished either through warning, demotion, dismissal or vacation of office.

The Act also empowers the **Inspector General of Government (IGG)** to;

- i. investigate corruption cases and allegations
- ii. access bank accounts of public officials or entities suspected of fraud and corruption
- iii. Issue orders placing restrictions of public officials to properties and other relevant assets tied to the allegations.

### d. **Anti-Corruption Act, 2009**

The Act allows an official who is convicted of corruption to be punished following the provisions of the law. Additionally, the law allows the court to impose a penalty on the person who has received gratification from corruption. For instance;

- i. A person found in possession of illicitly acquired pecuniary resources or property commits an offense and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding ten years or a fine not exceeding two hundred and forty currency points or both.
- ii. omits, or is privy to omitting, any material particular from any book, document, account, or electronic record, etc. commits an offense and is liable on conviction to a term of imprisonment not exceeding seven years or a fine not exceeding one hundred and sixty-eight currency points or both.

e. **Treasury Instructions, 2017**

The instructions apply to all votes that include; Ministries, Departments, Agencies, and Local Governments. They provide financial functions and procedures to be followed while administering the financial control mechanism of MDAs and Local Governments. The Instructions contains policies and systems, procedures and forms for conducting public finance management, and guides and regulate local government officials especially those responsible for financial management while performing their day-to-day work. The Treasury instructions contribute to the fight against corruption by;

- i. Providing a set of rules to be followed by the Accounting Officer in the management of public funds. The instructions are drawn from the Public Finance Management Act. Any officer who violates the instructions commits an offense.
- ii. Clearly defining the responsibility of the Accounting Officer as “preventing and detecting fraud, embezzlement, corruption, etc. An Accounting Officer is expecting to put in place an effective system of corruption risk detection and internal controls, emphasize an ethical and positive work environment which promotes integrity, honesty, respect, service excellence and accountability for the resources under his/her control”.

## When incidents of corruption have been identified, the Accounting Officer is expected to;

- i. Take disciplinary action against employees, which may include termination and legal action.
- ii. Proceed with legal action against other parties as recommended by legal advisors.
- iii. Pursue recovery of losses; and
- iv. Implement corrective action to reduce the likelihood of similar future incidents.

The Accounting Officer shall comply with all applicable laws, policies, directives, standing orders, and other authorities when investigating, reporting, and following up incidents.

### f. **Public Finance Management Act, 2015**

The Public Finance Management Act, 2015 (as amended) (hereafter referred to as “PFMA”) is the law that provides for the management of public finances in Uganda. The Act provides for the roles of Accounting Officers, establishes accounting standards and audit committees, provides for in-year reporting by government entities, provides for the preparation of annual accounts, and for accounting for classified expenditure and other matters connected to public finance management. The PFMA applies to all MDAs and LGs.

The PFMA empowers the Accounting Officers to;

- In consultation with relevant stakeholders, prepare a budget framework paper to be presented to the Minister of Finance.
- Execute the budget after it’s appropriated by Parliament
- Provide relevant reports to the Secretary to the Treasury.

## Offenses under PFMA (Section 79)

1. A person commits an offense if that person, without lawful authority under this Act or any other Act—

- Without reasonable excuse, fails to provide by the due date, any information the Secretary to the Treasury.
- without reasonable excuse fails to provide any information that the Accountant General or a person authorized by him or her may reasonably require under this Act;
- Without reasonable cause fails to provide, or wilfully obstructs access to any item required under this Act; 71 Act 3 Public Finance Management.
- Opens or causes to be opened any bank account for public or official use without the permission of the Accountant General.
- Being an Accounting Officer, without reasonable excuse fails to comply with any requirement of this Act or fails to execute duties and functions imposed on him or her under this Act;
- Borrows money on behalf of the Government, or repays or converts an existing loan;
- Issues public securities, or varies their terms and conditions;
- Lends money or any asset of Government;
- Issues guarantee or indemnities on behalf of the Government;
- Issues securities for loans made to the Government;
- Disposes of, pledges, or encumbers Government property;
- Refuses or neglects to pay any public money into a public or official bank account as may be required;
- Incurs unauthorized expenditures or makes unauthorized commitments;
- Fails to keep proper records or conceals or wrongfully destroys the information that is required to be recorded

by this Act;

- Makes any statement or declaration, or gives any information or document, required under this Act, knowing it to be false or misleading;
- Divulges data in electronic or other forms without authority; or
- Diverts Government funds to unauthorized activities.

Non-compliance with the provisions of the PFMA may result in the commission of an offense by any employee of a local government as provided under Section 79 (1). A person who commits an offense under this section shall on conviction be liable to a fine not exceeding five hundred currency points, or a term of imprisonment not exceeding four years, or both.



### Activity 1: Imagine you are in the following situations, what you would do.

- A noisy and aggressive councilor who insists on shouting people down when they disagree with him?
- A village comes to you to report that the in-charge of the health center is illegally selling?
- You hear a rumor that a member of the planning committee has failed to declare that he has shares in the company contracted to construct a community road in your village.
- Your council is criticized by the office of the auditor general for not doing enough to promote an anti-corruption culture. You are given the responsibility of leading the campaign. What might you do?

## 7. Keeping Grassroots Youth Engaged in Political Processes

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As of 2020, youth in Uganda are the youngest population in the world, with 78% of its population being under 30 years of age. This means that exploring possibilities of engaging young people and encouraging them to participate in political processes and community development from the lowest level is a key prerequisite for promoting sustainable development. Moreover, youth Participation in political processes is a fundamental part of citizenship. It is the process by which young people can influence decision-making that affects their lives to bring about positive change. Participation is not solely the act of expressing an opinion and having that opinion taken seriously, but of being able to construct that opinion freely through accessing information, meeting, and debating with others.

### Who is a youth in Uganda?

Uganda has the second youngest population globally with 78% of its citizens below 30 years, after the Republic of Niger's 83%. Ugandan youth constitutes 22%. Children below 18-years account for 55% of the population. Uganda uses two different categorizations for youth. The National Youth Council classifies youth as individuals aged 18-30 years and, the revised youth policy use 15-30 years. The Commonwealth identifies young people aged 15-29 years as youth. Uganda was ranked 135<sup>th</sup> out of 183 countries on the Commonwealth's 2016 Global Youth Development Index (YDI). The Commonwealth also ranks Uganda in the 08<sup>th</sup> position among 10 countries with the highest level of political-participation for young people. However it's important to engage with young people as early as possible to get their

views and to start to nurture an interest in the democratic process, so this workbook will look at engagement from primary school upwards.

## How can you engage young people in political processes?

Young people should have access to a range of activities as part of local youth engagement – from voting in elections to engaging in consultation and service design to participating in civic life. As a community leader, you are ideally placed to understand the particular challenges faced by young people. Councilors can support young people to participate in society – from shaping services to be delivered differently and helping to make decisions, right through to supporting social action where young people have changed their area for the better.

Meaningful youth participation happens when young people are treated as equal actors in local decision-making and involved from the start of the process. Tokenism (when young people appear to be given a chance to be represented but have little choice about how they participate and have limited or no influence in decision-making) is detrimental to youth engagement – and can put people off of taking part in the future attempts.

## Here are some practical hints and tips for engaging young people

- Involve young people from the earliest possible stage of any initiative
- Make sure young people understand what the project or process is about, what it's for, who is making the final decision and what influence they can have. Work with young people to establish ground rules at the beginning.
- Guarantee that all young people will be treated with equal respect.

- Remember that participation is voluntary – young people can choose to disengage at any point.
- Make sure you've considered the needs of young people with special educational needs or disabilities.
- Give young people feedback on what changes as a result of their input.

## Practical Ways to engage young people

**Face to face:** Consider engagement mechanisms such as youth clubs, sport clubs, and organizations like the Scouts, Guides, and the National Youth Council. Many youth organizations actively promote engagement in politics or citizenship, which is a good entry point for you to explain your role and let young people know how they can engage with you. Here are some of the ways you could engage young people;

**Schools:** Do a mapping of primary and secondary schools in your area and be a regular attendee and active participant in the Parents and Teachers Association (PTA) meetings. Where possible participate and support local activities like music competitions, football, and other sporting activities, among others.

**Universities/colleges:** If you have a university or any higher education learning center in your area, work closely and support the guild leadership, political and cultural associations, and clubs.

**Digital:** Social media is a great way to engage not only younger residents but your community as a whole. There are lots of types of social media, all of which have different users and different ways of engaging. If you are going to have one or more social media profiles, make sure you update it regularly and engage with your residents in a proactive, rather than reactive, way so that residents can see what you are doing as a community leader. If you have a website, keep this up-to-date and consider whether it's engaging for young

people. Is it clear what your priorities are, what you're doing for your community and how people can get involved in what you're doing?

## Structures and support for fostering youth participation: Uganda National Youth Council Act

All countries have a range of youth representative structures and organizations that involve young people in democracy, either through direct representation or by supporting them to engage in local democratic processes. In Uganda, the National Youth Council Act adopted in 1993 and Amended in 2010 and 2015 provides for the establishment of a National Youth Council and to provide for its composition, objects and functions, administration and finances, and for other connected purposes.

### Key highlights of the Uganda National Youth Council Act

1. The Act provides for the establishment of the National Youth Council which is a body corporate tasked with the responsibility of organizing the youth of Uganda in a unified body; engaging the youth in activities that are of benefit to them and the nation; and protecting the youth against any kind of manipulation.
2. There are a youth council at every level of local government in Uganda, namely, from the village, parish, sub-county, and municipality and District levels.
3. A village youth council consists of every person who has attained the age of eighteen years but is below the age of thirty years and is a resident of the village.
4. A parish or ward youth council shall consist of all the members of the village youth committees in the parish or ward. A sub-county, division, or town youth council consists of all the members of the parish youth com-

mittees in the sub-county, division, or town.

5. A county youth council consists of all the members of the sub-county, division, or town youth committees in the county. A district youth council consists of; the chairperson, vice-chairperson, secretary, publicity secretary, and finance secretary of each county youth committee in the district; and one male representative and one female representative of each sub-county youth council in the district elected by the sub-county.
6. The National Youth Council is composed of; one representative from each district elected by the members of the district youth council; two student representatives elected by the Uganda National Students Association, one of whom shall be a female; Ten female representatives elected by the conference from among the female members of the conference, at least two to represent a region.
7. The day-to-day operations of NYC is overseen by the national youth executive committee which is composed of elected representatives. There are 12 elected officials, namely; chairperson; vice-chairperson; general secretary; publicity secretary; secretary for women youth; secretary for student affairs; secretary for labor affairs; secretary for sports and culture; secretary for external relations; secretary for finance; and secretary for legal affairs.

## The key functions of the National Youth Council are;

- to inspire and promote among the youth a spirit of unity and national consciousness;
- to provide a unified and integrated system through which the youth may communicate and coordinate their ideas and activities;
- to establish channels through which economic and social services and amenities may reach the youth in all areas of Uganda;

- to encourage the youth to consolidate their role in national development in the economic, social, cultural, and educational fields;
- to initiate and encourage the formation of youth organizations and to facilitate communication among them;
- to promote relations between youth organizations in Uganda and international youth organizations and other bodies with similar objects or interests; and
- To do all such other things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the objects of the council under this Act.

## Resources

(Cap 319) National Youth Councils Act  
Uganda National Youth Policy

# 8. Operations of the Local Council Courts

## Introduction

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda provided for the creation of Local Councils courts (“LCC”) as part of the decentralization of power. LCCs are the lowest units with administrative, legislative, and judicial powers on behalf of central governments. LCCs are established under the Executive Committees (Judicial Powers) Act and there are three levels of the Committee courts – “sub-county” (level 3), “parish” (level 2), and “village” (level 1).

## Leadership, Membership, and composition of the LCCs

At the sub-county level, the courts are generally composed of five members of their jurisdiction chosen by the respective executive council of that area apart. At least one of the members must be a woman. At the village and parish level, local council courts where all the 11 members of the executive council form the court. At least two of the members of each of these courts should be women.

Members of the LCC must be local residents, have high moral character and proven integrity; be knowledgeable in the common local language of the community in question and English, and must not be a member of another local council court. LCCs elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson from among themselves. The Vice-Chairperson should be a woman if the Chairperson is a man and vice versa if the Chairperson is a woman.

The sub-county chief is the Secretary to the LCC and the Secretary is not allowed to take part in the decision-making of the court. Members of the LCC shall be evacuated if they are involved in corruption, abuse of office, or any form of misconduct.



### Activity 1: What would you do?

- a. Imagine you are the LCIII Chairperson of your sub-county, what would you do to ensure that the members of your LCC meet the qualifications as articulated in the Local Council Courts Act?
- b. Imagine you are the LCI of your village, what would you do to ensure that you have a competent and qualified secretary?

## Who can go to the LCCs and what kinds of cases are heard there?

All village, parish, or sub-county residents can go to their local council representatives to help them with their legal challenges. Usually, cases are reported to the Local Council Chairperson who assesses and determines whether he can settle the case amicably without summoning a court. It must be noted that LCCs are only allowed to hear and judge civil cases. Such cases include; affray, common assault, actual bodily harm, theft, criminal trespass and, malicious property damage.

The Local Council Courts' jurisdiction is restricted to where the value of the subject matter in dispute does not exceed UGX 2,000,000 (two million shillings). However, these courts' jurisdiction is not restricted by the monetary values in respect of causes and matters on conversion or damage to property, trespass, land disputes relating to a customary tenure, disputes concerning marital status of women, disputes concerning the paternity of children, disputes concerning the identity of customary heirs, impregnating a girl under 18 years of age, elopement with a girl under 18 years of age and customary bailment.



## Activity 2

- a. As a local councilor, what are some of the practical steps you should take if the subject matter in dispute reported to you exceeds the legally accepted value of UGX 2,000,000?
- b. What are some of the examples of customary cases in your area that can be brought to your LCC?

## Can children be tried in the LCC?

A village executive committee court (LC I) has the criminal jurisdiction to try a child accused of any of the following offenses: affray, common assault, actual bodily harm, theft, criminal trespass, malicious damage to property

A Local Council Court 1 may, notwithstanding any penalty prescribed by the Penal Code Act in respect of the offenses stated above involving children, make an order for any of the following relief: reconciliation; compensation; restitution; community service; apology.

In addition to the relief mentioned above, the Local Council Court may make a guidance order under which the child shall be required to submit himself or herself to the guidance, supervision, advice, and assistance of a person designated by the court. A guidance order shall be for a maximum period of six months.



## Activity 3: Role Play

Imagine a child has committed one of the offenses listed above but his parents are not being cooperative. What would you do to ensure that the parents are brought on the same page to settle the case amicably?

## Modus operandi of LCCs

LCCs are only held a designated place within the limits of its jurisdiction and all proceedings of the Court is presided over by the Chairperson. In the absence of the Chairperson, the Vice-Chairperson presides over the meetings. LCCs sit as often as the business of the court requires.

The quorum of the court at any sitting shall be;

- (a) In the case of a village or parish, five members including the person presiding, two of whom shall be women; and
- (b) In the case of a town, division, or sub-county, three members including the person presiding, one of whom shall be a woman;

If the quorum is lost for any reason, the court shall adjourn to another time.

Every question arising before a local council court shall be determined by consensus, and in the absence of a consensus shall be determined by a majority of votes of the members sitting by show of hands. Where the votes are equal, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote.

Subject to the provisions of this section, the judgment of the court shall be made by the Chairperson and the members of the court who were present throughout the hearing of the evidence relating to that case.

## Powers of the LCC

Without prejudice to any other powers, a local council court may make an order for any one or more of the following reliefs -

- (a) Reconciliation;
- (b) Declaration;
- (c) Compensation;

(d) Restitution;

(e) Costs;

(f) Apology; or

(g) Attachment and sale; and

(h) In the case of infringement of a bye-law or Ordinance, impose a fine, community service, or any other penalty authorized by that bye-law or Ordinance.

## Institution of civil proceedings

Every civil suit shall be instituted by stating to the Chairperson the nature of the claim against the defendant and the relief sought by the claimant.

Every claim shall be signed by the claimant, but if made orally, shall be reduced into writing by the Chairperson, Secretary, or a person appointed by the local council court for the purpose, and when reduced into writing shall be read to the claimant and shall be signed by the claimant and countersigned by the Chairperson.

The statement of claim shall be filed and a date for the hearing of the case fixed and the court shall be convened by the Chairperson for the purpose.

For the avoidance of doubt, in this section in the case of a person who is unable to sign his or her name “sign” includes affixing of a thumbprint.

## Notice of claim to be served on parties

After filing the statement, the Chairperson or other person shall cause a notice of the claim to be served upon the defendant. The Chairperson shall cause a summons to be served on the claimant and the defendant requiring them to attend the court at the time and place specified in the

summons for the hearing of the case, and the summons shall be substantially as set out in **Form A** (which can be found as schedule in the Local Council Courts Act).

The Chairperson may cause the claimant or defendant to be summoned orally by informing him or her that he or she is summoned, but the person who orally informs the claimant or defendant shall be accompanied by a witness for that purpose.

## Witness summons

Before the date fixed for the hearing of a case, the summons shall be served on any person requiring the attendance of that person as a witness at the time and place specified in the summons as may be required.

Every witness summons shall, if practicable, be served personally on the person summoned by delivering or tendering to him or her a duplicate of the summons at the same time producing if so required, the original.

The witness summons shall be substantially as set out in **Form B** (which can be found as scheduled in the Local Council Courts Act).

The Chairperson may cause a witness to be summoned orally.

Every person upon whom a witness summons is served shall sign or put his or her mark, in the recognition of the receipt of the summons upon the back of the original copy; and if he or she refuses to do so the person who has effected service of the summons shall record the refusal in writing.

Where, without sufficient excuse, a witness does not appear in obedience to the summons the local council court, on proof of the proper service of the summons in a reasonable time before the hearing date, may issue a warrant ordering the Police force to bring him or her before the court at a time and place specified in the summons to give evidence and after that, the witness shall be discharged.

Any witness who has been summoned to give evidence or to produce any document before a local council court—

(a) Without lawful excuse, refuses to give evidence before the local council court or refuses or willfully fails to produce any document in his or her possession when requested to do so by the local council court;

(b) Gives before a local council court evidence which he or she knows to be false in a material particular;

Commits an offense and is liable on conviction, to a fine not exceeding one currency point or imprisonment not exceeding ten days or both.

## Right of appeal

A party dissatisfied with the judgment or order of a local council court may, subject to the provisions of this section or any written law, appeal against the judgment or order; but no appeal shall lie from a judgment or order passed or made as a result of the consent of the parties.

## Lodging of appeal

An appeal from a village, parish, town, division or sub-county local council court shall be lodged within fourteen days from the date of the judgment or order appealed against.

Every appeal shall be presented in a memorandum signed by the appellant, setting forth the grounds of appeal, and the memorandum shall be substantially as set out in **Form D** (which can be found as Schedule in the Local Council Courts Act).

The appellate court shall cause a notice of the memorandum of appeal to be served on the respondent, and the notice shall be substantially as set out in **Form E** (which can be found as scheduled in the Local Council Courts Act).

In conclusion, LCCs are one of the most accessible justice mechanisms in contemporary Uganda. LCCs are much more trusted by local population since they are heavily inclined towards reconciliation and dispute resolution. Moreover, LCCs normally handle cases involving plaintiffs who cannot afford court fees. It is difficult for the majority of the population in Uganda to access justice in the formal court system because they cannot afford the costs of litigation.

However, there is still a lot of effort needed to train and sensitize local councilors about the law since most of them are not knowledgeable about it. To ease access, the law could also be translated into local language since most local councilors in rural Uganda cannot effectively read, write or effectively communicate using the English language.

## 9. Enacting/ Making by-laws

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Under Chapter 243 of the Local Government Act, local government councils are given the legislative powers to enact ordinances and bylaws to facilitate the effective implementation of government programmes, national policies, and laws. The district councils have the power to formulate ordinances while the lower local governments have powers to formulate bylaws. This section provides step-by-step guidance on how lower local councilors can enact and ensure the implementation of bylaws.

### By-Laws: An introduction

A by-law<sup>3</sup> is a rule or law established by an organization or community to regulate itself, as allowed or provided for by some higher authority. The higher authority, generally a legislature or some other government body, establishes the degree of control that the by-laws may exercise. By-laws may be established by entities such as local governments, neighborhood associations, cooperatives, etc.

According to Section 39(6) and Regulation 22 of the Third Schedule of the Local Government Act, lower local governments such as urban councils, sub-county councils, divisions, and village councils are given the constitutional mandate to enact bylaws and enforce their implementation. According to this provision, such bylaws must not be inconsistent with the constitution or any other law enacted by Parliament, or an ordinance of the district council or a bylaw passed by a higher council.

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3 <https://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/structure/organizational-structure/write-bylaws/main>

## Principles of making bylaws

When making bylaws, councilors must ensure that;

- Such a bylaw addresses local and community issues and not individual concerns. And that the nature and magnitude of such a problem warrants and is justifiable for passing by-law.
- The bylaw should not be inconsistent with or in conflict with the existing laws whether enacted by the local governments or central government.
- Matters already adequately provided for by the constitution or an Act of Parliament should not be included in an ordinance or bylaw except for ease of reference in which case the entire provision should be lifted or reproduced in its entirety.
- The public is consulted during the formulation of the bylaw because public participation is critical for its successful implementation.
- The bylaw contains the “do “and “don’ts” and that the document must prescribe offenses and penalties.
- The bylaw is reasonable and can be easily enforceable.
- Bylaw is limited within given geographical scopes and territorial jurisdictions. Implementation of a village bylaw will be limited to that special village/ward. The same is true for Parishes and sub-counties.
- The date on which a bylaw takes effect is the date upon which it is certified by the Chairperson of that particular jurisdiction.

## What should local councilors consider when enacting/implementing bylaws?

When enacting bylaws, councilors should know/ensure that;

- They have no powers to make a law relating to the establishment or administration of courts and should not attempt to do so.

- The bylaws they have enacted must be approved and certified by the superior local government.
- The process of making of bylaws should be widely consultative to ensure reasonableness and fairness of the law.
- Fines imposed in an ordinance or bylaw must be within the law as prescribed by the Local Government Act. The penalty of a fine should not exceed two currency points or a term of imprisonment of six months, but the convict can be subjected to both a fine and imprisonment.
- In addition to the penalty, any expenses incurred by the local council or person or other public body as a result of the breach of a provision of the bylaw shall be paid by the person convicted, and expenses may be recovered summarily as a civil debt.

## Process of enacting/making bylaws at the village/parish level

- Every councillor has a right to introduce a bylaw in his or her council.
- A councilor wishing to introduce a bylaw shall forward the bylaw to the chairperson who shall distribute or cause to be distributed copies to members of the council at least fourteen days before the bylaw is to be debated.
- The chairperson shall summon a special council meeting to debate and discuss the proposed bylaw.
- The chairperson or the councilor wishing to introduce the bylaw can present it to other councilors.
- The presentation of the bylaw must take into consideration analysis of the problem and highlight how the bylaw contributes towards the fulfillment of specific government programmes, laws, and policies.
- The LCI & LCII council executive through the Secretary can then draft the bylaw.

- When the bylaw is passed and adopted by the council, it is forwarded to the LCIII Chairperson for certification.
- The application for certification of the bylaw should be signed by the LCI (for the village) or LCII Chairperson (for the parish).
- After the certification of the bylaw by the LCIII Chairperson, five copies of the certified copy shall be signed by the LCI (village) or LCII (parish) Chairperson.
- After the LCI Chairperson has signed the bylaw, it becomes a functional local law.
- The bylaw shall be distributed as follows; 1 copy to the LCI Chairperson, 1 copy to the LCII Chairperson, 1 copy to the Parish Development Committee Chairperson, 1 copy to the sub-county Speaker, one copy to the LC III Chairperson, 1 copy to the parish chief.
- The council is obliged to notify the public about the new bylaw and when it is going to commence. Notification of the public can be done through organizing community meetings, community gatherings like burials, churches, mosques, campaign rallies, among others.

## Step-by-step processes of enacting bylaws by Councilors at the sub-county level

If the council chairperson has not received a concrete proposal to enact bylaws from Councils but there is a need to work on any bylaw, the following steps can be undertaken;

### **Step 1: Appointment of the Bylaw Committee**

The process of making byelaws starts with the appointment of the Bylaw Committee by the council.

#### **a) At the sub-county, the committee is as follows:**

- The committee is composed of 6 members, the Parish Chief (LCII) or Sub-County Chief (LCII) being the Chairper-

son;

- Parish chief or sub-county as the secretary;
- Community Development Officer
- 3 other co-opted members. Such members may involve legal professionals or officers belonging to any department from the relevant field.

## **Step 2: Problem identification and analysis**

After the formation and composition of the Bylaw Committee, members shall;

- Identify and analyze the extent of the problem that needs to be addressed by legal means.
- The analysis of the problem will consider the impact of the problem on the community.
- The problem is identified through interactions and consultations with the people affected.
- The committee will also consider how the problem is being dealt with or tackled by people affected by the problem. For example, if it is a challenge of stray animals destroying people's crops in the garden, how are community members already addressing such a problem?

## **Step 3: Examination of the Existing Laws and Identification of Gaps**

After identifying the problem, the Bylaw Committee will: Carryout an audit or examination of the existing laws i.e. Constitution, Acts/Statutes, Ordinances, Regulations, and Byelaws. The purpose is to establish whether there are laws in place to handle/solve the problem identified and to avoid duplication and conflict with the existing laws. The examination will also help to propose the way forward in case there is no law/ordinance to solve the problem at hand.

#### **Step 4: Consultation Stage**

At the consultation stage, the Bylaw Committee does the following:

- The Bylaw Committee will carry out consultations with people and authorities to allow consensus building on key aspects/issues that will be incorporated in the draft bill at the drafting stage.
- Consultations with concerned stakeholders will help determine whether or not the law will be successfully implemented.
- The Bylaw Committee which is mandated by the council should ensure that all relevant authorities, the constituents, stakeholders, and other organizations that are likely to be affected by the ordinance are consulted. Consultations may be organized or conducted through group discussions, rallies, meetings, sending questionnaires, and any other means it considers appropriate for information gathering.

#### **Step 5: Drafting the bylaw**

- The Bylaw Committee shall draft the bylaw and to the council incorporating the findings, institutions to implement the resulting bylaw, key guiding principles and issues to be contained in the bill, lead institutions, and the social, political, and economic impact of the resulting law and the estimated cost of implementing the resulting law.
- The council will transmit the report of the Bylaw Committee to the responsible department, for example, the Office-In-Charge (OC) of the sub-county Police Station, CDO, etc.

#### **Step 6: Proposing and Introducing the Bill to Council**

When the committee is satisfied with the draft bill, it shall:

- Prepare a motion that shall contain the main issues and rationale of the bill.

- The Secretary/Clerk to Council shall forward the bill accompanied by the motion to the Council for tabling and debating.
- The motion shall outline the purpose and objectives of the bill, key provisions, and issues, how they are being addressed.
- The bill is introduced by a Councillor.
- The Council debates the motion and if the motion is passed by majority vote, the council will publish the bill at least fourteen days before commencement of its debate.

### **Step 7: Publication and Dissemination of the Draft Bill**

Publication of the draft bill is a mandatory requirement. A draft bill must be published before it is debated by the plenary council. Publication of the draft bill helps in the following ways:

- a. It enables the public to contribute and participate in the law-making process.
- b. The draft bill is brought to the attention of the members of the public to view and make their contributions.

Publication and dissemination of a bill are done in the following ways:

- Fixing a copy of the draft bill in a place where the public can easily access it i.e. on the notice board of the sub-county.
- Sharing on various WhatsApp groups and other social media platforms if available.
- By putting copies in places of worship, marketplaces, and other public places.
- The Clerk to Council must ensure that each member of the council gets a copy to enable them to study the draft bill and consult on it in their constituencies.

## Step 8: Debating the Bill

After the draft bill has been published and distributed to the councilors, the council shall after 14 days of its publication start debating the draft bill in the following manner:

- Debating of the draft bill commences immediately after the lapse of 14 days.
- Where there is an emergency, the 14 days of publication may be waived by a resolution of the council.
- Before commencement of the debate the speaker shall invite the member or head of the committee under whose docket the draft bill falls to introduce the bill.
- Upon introducing the bill, the Clerk to Council shall then read the title of the bill.
- The speaker shall call upon the member introducing the bill to give an introductory speech-giving reason for introducing the bill and what it is intended to achieve.
- After the speech of the member introducing the bill, the Speaker shall invite the council members to debate the bill based on the memorandum and the introductory speech.
- Members of the council may be allowed to make amendments in writing and submit them before the closure of the debate.
- At the close of the debate, the Speaker shall put the question in respect of each clause of the bill as published or as is amended by any member.
- The bill shall be passed if the members pass through voting all clauses as published or amended by the council.
- Upon passing the bill, the council formally dissolves and adopts the ordinance.
- The adopted bylaw shall be sealed with the seal of the council.
- The Chairperson shall sign and date the document.
- The Speaker upon passing and adopting the bylaw, shall forward the bylaw to the LC 5 Chairperson for certification.

### **Step 9: Certification of the Bill**

- When the bill is passed and adopted by the council, it is forwarded to the District Chairperson for certification.
- The main purpose of certification is to ensure that the bylaw complies with other national laws and policies governing the subject being covered.
- The other purpose is to ensure that the bylaw is not inconsistent with the Constitution or any other law passed by parliament.
- The application for certification of a bill should be signed by the LC3 Chairperson of the sub-county.

### **Step 10: Signing and Publication**

- After certifying the bylaw, five copies of the certified copy shall be signed by the LCIII Chairperson.
- After the LCIII Chairperson has signed the bill, it becomes law.
- The bylaw shall be distributed as follows; one copy to Chairperson III, one copy to the sub-county Speaker, one copy to the LC 5 Chairperson, two copies to Chief Administrative Officer.

### **Step 11: Publication of the bylaw**

- The council is obliged to notify the public about the new bylaw and when it is going to commence.
- On publication of the bylaw, the date of signature and commencement shall be indicated.
- The date of commencement is fixed by the relevant council.
- The bylaw shall be given a number.
- The number given shall be in the order of its publication among bylaws published at the sub-county.

## Major Challenges in making and implementing bylaws

- Making a bylaw is tedious work which requires passion and dedication to particular community challenges, rather than politicking.
- Making bylaws also takes time and it requires a lot of patience and persistence.
- More so, making bylaws requires knowledge and expertise on the subject matter which requires local councillors to conduct research and be informed about specific details of the community challenge in question.
- At the lower local government, the process is not widely consultative due to resource and other constraints leading to other community voices being left out.
- Similarly, bylaws are not widely publicized which ends up curtailing implementation.

## Resources

1. Chapter 243, The Local Governments Act 1997
2. Mugenyi, O., and Kagarura, D., (2020). Step by Step Guidelines for Making Ordinances and Byelaws in Uganda (Revised Edition), Kampala, ACODE Policy Briefing Paper Series No.54.

# 10. Implementing the Parish Development Model

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## Parish Development Model (PDM): An Introduction

Over the years, many local development models and programmes have been attempted in Uganda. Some of these models and programmes include but are not limited to; prosperity for all, Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS), Operation Wealth Creation, EMYOOGA, among others. Particularly in Northern Uganda, many local development models have also been implemented, such as Northern Uganda Social Action Fund (NUSAF I, II, & III), Plan for Reconstruction and Development of Northern Uganda (PRDP), etc.

In Uganda's third National Development Plan (NDP III), the Parish Development Model (PDM) was presented as a local development agenda to drive Uganda's vision 2040, i.e. "A Transformed Ugandan Society from a Peasant to a Modern and Prosperous Country within 30 years". The Parish Development Model (PDM) is a strategy for organizing and delivering public and private sector interventions for wealth creation and employment generation at the parish level as the lowest economic planning unit.

## Objectives of the Parish Development Model (PDM)

PDM seeks to;

- a) Accelerate the implementation of Area-Based Commodity Development (ABCD) planning which is vital for realizing the quantity and quality of agricultural production required for agro - industrialization and export development.
- a) Extends the whole-of-government approach for development to the parish level in a consolidated manner as opposed to working in silos; and
- a) Localizes Vision 2040 and the National Development Plan for effective measurement and management of development interventions.

## The legal framework of the PDM

Implementation of the PDM is premised on the following policy and legal frameworks:

- Article 176, (2b, d, e, and f) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda (1995 as amended) gives primacy to decentralization and local governance.
- The Local Government Act 1997 guides and strengthens the operations of local government entities in Uganda.
- The Third National Development Plan (NDPIII). NDPIII identifies the need to bring services closer to the people by strengthening the sub-county as the lowest planning unit and the Parish as the administrative and operational hub for all government services.

## Key highlights of the PDM

- The Parish Development Model (PDM) is **the last mile strategy for service delivery** by the Government of Uganda for improving the incomes and welfare of all Ugandans at the household level.

- It is an extension of the whole-of-government approach to development as envisaged under NDP III, with the Parish as the lowest administrative and operational hub for delivering services closer to the people and hence fostering local economic development
- The PDM underlies the spirit of harmonization of government intervention with every MDAs focusing on; delivering services closer to the people, and measurable results at the Parish level to ensure transformation of the subsistence households into the money economy. This transformation requires organized, integrated, well-coordinated, and results-based efforts.
- The PDM **has seven Pillars** i.e. (a) Production, Storage, Processing, and Marketing; (b) Infrastructure and Economic Services; (c) Financial Inclusion; (d) Social Services; (e) Mindset change; (f) Parish.

## Key promises of the PDM

PDM promises to;

- Create data systems that constantly feed the whole Government with real-time information concerning various interventions at the Parish level.
- Create opportunities for investing in the organization and coordination of farmers at the Parish level and other value chain actors through area-based commodity clusters to increase production and productivity that will create sustainable agricultural production.
- Regularly provide agricultural extension and education to farming households including business management training and access to finance.
- Build infrastructure and systems that support the processing and marketing of Uganda's agricultural products.
- Strengthen participatory planning by local communities to collectively identify and address systemic bottlenecks that affect local economic development.

- Provide access to financial services to households that operate in the subsistence economy but with bankable projects along the value chain of the 18 priority commodities.

### **18 priority commodities under PDM**

Coffee, Fish, Cotton, Dairy, Cocoa 12. Beef, Cassava, Bananas, Tea, Beans, Vegetable Oils/Oil Palm, Avocado, Maize, Shea Nut, Rice, Cashew Nuts, Sugar Cane, Macadamia Nuts

## **Key principles of PDM**

- **Organization:** through cooperatives and other formal structures to promote production and market linkages.
- **Coordination & collaboration:** by empowering and strengthening the office of the parish chief.
- **Market orientation:** by strengthening the value chains, incentivize structures, competition, efficiency, and innovation
- **Prioritizing:** 18 agricultural commodities.
- **Evidence-based:** Decisions and actions under the PDM will be driven by data, analysis, evaluation, learning, and results.
- **Participation:** Ensuring that communities are part of the solutions to local problems
- **Transparency and accountability:** Operating with integrity and transparency, and maintaining the highest standards of performance.

## **How the PDM Works**

- Coordination of PDM implementation is conducted by the Ministry of Local Government
- Mobilization of stakeholders and non-state actors is being done to support the implementation of PDM.

- The popularization of PDM at the national and sub-national levels shall be prioritized.
- Operationalization of all PDM pillars by allocation of required resources.
- Filling all Vacant Positions for Parish Chiefs in the District shall be done.
- Operationalization of the PDCs and PMC at the parish level.
- Equipping PDCs with necessary IT equipment for data collection.
- Support capacity building of stakeholders at the National and Sub-National levels.
- Support Formation of Community Groups /SAACOs.
- Roll out popularization and sensitization of PDM in print, electronic media, and meetings.

## The 7 pillars of the PDM

### Pillar 1: Production, Processing, and Marketing

This Pillar is aimed at supporting the creation of more productive jobs and wealth for all Ugandans especially in the Agro-Industrialization, Private Sector Development, Digital Transformation, and Manufacturing Programmes under the NDPIII.

This Pillar will emphasize the delivery of the following services at the parish level.

- Extension services: for a crop, animal husbandry, and fisheries
- Training/capacity building.
- Organization - groups, associations, cooperatives.
- Inputs: seed, fertilizers, drugs, pesticides, machinery.

- Farm power and off-farm mechanization
- Certification and regulation: for standards and safety.
- Commodity Storage and Bulking Facilities: fresh, wet, and dry goods
- Value addition and processing facilities to include cleaning, sorting, drying, manufacturing and packaging.
- Environment and other climate change mitigation measures
- Water: for domestic use and production
- Access to Market.
- Business Development Services.
- Related digital services supporting production, storage, processing and marketing.

## Pillar 2: Infrastructure and Economic Services

Public and private sector institutions will provide a range of infrastructure and economic services at the Parish level in a phased approach. These infrastructure and economic services complement the functions under other pillars of the PDM and include:

- Accessible community roads
- Improvement of choke points /bridges on community roads
- Upgrade community local markets
- Extension of safe water for domestic use
- Extension of power to communities
- Creation of free internet zones in communities
- Extension of the National internet infrastructure to the sub-county

- Appropriate staffing to support ICT function in Local governments shall be put in place.
- Develop appropriate e-services to support the PDM.

### **Pillar 3: Financial Inclusion**

This pillar aims to enable the participation of subsistence households in the financial sector and hence the money economy by improving access to financial services for households. The six components of this pillar are;

- Community Organization: CBOs, cooperatives, Associations, etc.
- Business development services (BDS): provided by Enterprise Uganda and other local government actors.
- Payment systems: digitized payments using a dedicated online platform.
- Insurance: scaling up Uganda Agricultural Insurance Scheme
- Savings.
- Low-cost loans using the Parish Revolving Fund.

### **Pillar 4: Social Services**

Primary health care, education, access to clean water, transport, and communication that constitute basic social services are enablers in the attainment of a better quality of life for households. The resources transferred will be appropriately planned for by the local governments to: -

- Construct and equip health center (HCII)
- Recruit critical staff as well as extension workers needed.
- Strengthen infrastructure /facilities management
- Provide and maintain safe and accessible water points
- Support functional Village Health Teams (VHT)

- Construct/upgrade community primary schools
- Provide logistics and equipment for institutions (schools, Hospitals, Health centers)

## **Pillar 5: Parish Based Management Information System (PBMIS)**

The Parish Based Management Information System (PBMIS) is an integrated system that seeks to support community profiling, data collection, analysis, tabulation, storage, and dissemination at the Parish level. Data will be collected at the local level and shall be overseen by the Parish Chief and PDC.

## **Pillar 6: Governance and Administration**

Whilst PDM shall be overseen at the National level by a high-level Policy Committee; an inter-institutional PDM Technical Committee with associated working groups; and a PDM Secretariat, a lower local government such are equally essential in governance and administration.

## **Role of sub-counties, Divisions and Town Councils in PDM**

The Sub County Chief/Town Clerk will be the Accounting Officer and the CDO the focal point person. The Sub- County shall:

- Strengthen the capacity of Parishes/Wards on PDM conceptualization, planning, budgeting, and implementation.
- Receive and consolidate Parish level work plans/budgets for the PDM implementation
- Receive, manage and account for PDM related finances as well as other resources under their control
- Supervise and consolidate the collection and management of Parish-based data

- Ensure the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the PDM activities at the sub-county/division/town council and Parish level
- Receive and compile reports from Parish for submission to the District, City, and Municipalities
- Ensure formation of the PDC/WDC within the Parishes/wards under their control.
- Create awareness and advocate for the Implementation of the PDM
- Provide technical support services at the Parishes/Wards
- Provide overall coordination and supervision of the PDM at the community level.

## Role of Parish Chief and the Parish Development Committee (PDC)

Per Section 69 of the Local Government Act (1997), the Parish Chief will be responsible for ensuring the implementation of district and government policies and programs in his or her area of jurisdiction. The Parish Chief will assist the Parish Council in planning, budgeting, and budget implementation; supervise or monitor the implementation of government projects; and implement lawful councils' policies and decisions of the council.

The Parish Development Committee (PDC) is comprised of 12 members, including; the parish chief (1), LC II Chairperson (1), members of the Parish Executive Council (6), CSO representative (1), business representative (1), opinion leaders (2), LC I (number yet TBC).

The PDC and Parish Chief play the following roles in the implementation of the PDM;

- Mobilize, Sensitize and create awareness on PDM programmes to the community

- Participate in the identification of the needs and priorities of the village using a participatory approach.
- Ensure preparation of Parish Action plans and budgets
- Participate in the selection of groups and individuals to benefit from PDM activities.
- Coordinate and support the implementation of PDM activities.
- Responsible for the data collection on PDM activities.
- Oversee the implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the projects at the village level.
- Responsible for the overall accountability of resources provided to the PDC for operations.
- Mobilize community for PPCP arrangement.
- Prepare and submit progress reports on the implementation of the PDM activities.

## **Pillar 7: Mind Set Change, Community Mobilization, and Cross-Cutting Issues**

This pillar focuses on the adoption of the right way of thinking and opinions of public sector officials at all levels of private sector players and communities. The purpose is to achieve realistic planning, implementation, resource utilization, and management as well as reporting and accountability processes.

### **Why is the mindset change important under PDM?**

- To enhance effective mobilization of families, communities, and citizens for household economic empowerment.
- To strengthen the capacity of Local Governments, CSOs, CBOs, NGOs, and the private sector for effective mobilization of communities

- To enhance participation and ownership of community initiatives.
- To enhance household capacity in identifying local resources for addressing their needs.
- To promote national values and reduce negative cultural practices and attitudes.

## Resource

MoLG (2021). Implementation Guidelines for Parish Development Model



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