

CASE STUDY: IMPROVING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMMES THROUGH YOUTH-LED ACCOUNTABILITY IN UGANDA

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This case study describes how youth-led monitoring of livelihoods projects has contributed to improvements in development projects in two locations in Uganda.

The Model for Change

The model for change is a youth-led, tech-enabled, community engagement approach led by youth volunteers. In 2020-21, Restless Development Uganda piloted this approach in Uganda as part of [the Development Alternative](#) programme. Young volunteers use the [Development Check app](#) to monitor livelihoods projects in their communities.

Through monitoring and engagement with their communities, young people discovered improvements that could be made to these projects. Using the data generated from visiting the project together with feedback from the community, young people have been collaborating with development actors and community members to solve problems (so-called 'fixes') and create more effective projects, whilst proving the case for youth-led solutions. The aim of the project was to help shift power to communities and young people so that they can hold development actors to account and solve problems to make development projects more effective for the community. The programme worked in two districts: Kampala, Uganda's capital city, and Moroto, a rural district in the northeast of the country.

Watch [this video](#) to learn more about the Model for Change.

The following three case stories capture some of the community benefits we have recorded after Restless Development volunteers monitored programmes in Uganda.



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The Youth Livelihood Programme in Moroto district

The Government Financial scheme (Youth Livelihood Programme - Moroto district) was a government loan scheme targeting businesspersons in the district to recapitalize the beneficiaries' businesses. It has funded cattle traders, chicken traders, shop owners, soap makers and other businesses since 2020. This programme had three monitors who would often team up to conduct their work. They met two times with the chairperson of the group (one of the beneficiaries of the loans selected to represent the beneficiary businesses) and approximately six times with the programme's beneficiaries over an 8-month period.

THE PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED

From listening to beneficiaries, the main problem that the Restless Development youth monitors heard was delays in receiving the second disbursement of the programme's funds to projects. As this had not happened it was putting businesses at risk, particularly considering the economic effects of the COVID lockdown from March 2020.

PROGRAMME FIXES

The volunteers talked with beneficiaries of the fund and the project lead and facilitated a meeting with the programme staff to hear the beneficiaries. After listening to beneficiaries, the programme staff agreed to release the second disbursement in the second half of 2020. One programme staff noted that the Restless Development volunteers **"helped coordinate the meeting with a government representative to make the second disbursement possible."**

BENEFITS FOR THE COMMUNITY

The youth-led monitoring identified that 297 people benefited from the second disbursement in the second half of 2020. Without the second disbursement it was likely the businesses would have had to close: **"by the time the second disbursement of funds came some businesses were on the verge of closing but thanks to the recapitalization these businesses were stabilized."**

At time of writing, there was no available information on how many of the businesses supported by the loan scheme were still running. The project lead and two of the beneficiaries interviewed for this research shared that many households who started businesses and received the second disbursement of the grants were, as a result of the income from their business, able to buy goods to meet their basic needs whilst some were able to make improvements to their houses.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

Another issue beneficiaries discussed with Restless Development volunteers were that there were some cases of domestic violence against women that were potentially linked to the programme. Respondents reported that the delay had, in some cases contributed to mistrust between partners over the spending of the loan and tensions around the decisions of whether to apply for the loan and what this might say about a husband's ability to provide for his family. The programme staff were not officially informed of this issue because the beneficiaries feared that the response would be to stop the fund. Instead, the volunteers and the project lead reached out to other non-government organisations asking advice on how to support communities experiencing gender-based violence. Another initiative undertaken by volunteers was, together with the project lead, providing training to some beneficiaries in business management skills.

PROJECT 2

The Kamera Access Road Project in Moroto district

The construction of the Kamera Access Road was a government-funded project, ultimately backed by the World Bank NUSAF 3 programme, which aims to support livelihoods by recruiting members of the community to work on local infrastructure projects.¹ The road connects the villages of Loputuk, Kamera, Natapar and Looi. It started around November 2019. The project activities included hiring and paying community members for road construction. The Kamera Access Road project had two monitors, who met the project beneficiaries sixteen times over eight months.

THE PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED

The road construction employees (recruited from the local community) reported to the monitors that the main problem they had was the non-payment of wages. The beneficiaries had been paid less than the time worked because of a faulty biometric machine. The project used the biometric machine for ensuring the right employees received the right wages. With the machine broken it meant wages could not be paid; non-payment of wages caused the construction staff (beneficiaries) to stop working which delayed construction for some weeks. One respondent shared: **“we feared that our wages were not going to be paid to us.”**

PROGRAMME FIXES

The volunteers talked to the members of the community recruited to undertake the road, and took their concerns about the wages to the project staff who reported to the project’s headquarters. As a result, an order was made to repair the biometric machine.

Project staff had already reported their concerns to the project headquarters before, however, it seems that it was only after the involvement of the youth volunteers that moves were made to repair to the biometric machine.

BENEFITS FOR THE COMMUNITY

Once the biometric machine was fixed, the road construction workers started receiving payment for their work and the road construction resumed. Though it was not possible to identify a precise number of community members employed that benefited from this fix, it is understood that there were well over a hundred workers. Further, community members can make better use of the road because of the resumption of construction.

One respondent shared that once **“we got paid, people were able to buy basic needs for their families and some started small businesses.”**

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

The lead member of the beneficiaries and the volunteers felt that a barrier to quick responses was the bureaucratic nature of the government project. Another problem reported to the Restless Development monitoring team was that the road was supposed to be constructed using Murram (a mineral soil containing laterite, which dries hard) to ensure the road surface does not wash off. However, the reported that this construction step never happened. The issue was reported to project staff, but at time of writing (December 2021) the issue was not resolved and, as a result, parts of the road have washed away.

¹ NUSAF 3 refers to the Northern Uganda Social Action Fund Project (3), which aims to provide effective income support to and build the resilience of poor and vulnerable households in Northern Uganda, a component of which is to support labour intensive public works.

PROJECT 3

The Youth Livelihood Programme in Kampala

The Youth Livelihood Programme (YLP) in Kampala aimed at building the skills and increasing the income of young entrepreneurs in the community. The main support given was a loan to youth-led business groups. The YLP was managed by the Kampala City Corporation Authority (KCCA). All three of the below projects were part of the YLP.

The Kikaya Bakery project had a four-person leadership committee that managed the project and sought to develop their business management skills. This group included a project lead/chairperson and a treasurer in charge of the finances of the group. In addition to the leadership committee there were fifteen youth trainees. Both the leadership and trainees planned to generate income from developing their skills and in baking cakes and other confectioneries. The Kikaya Bakery project had two Restless Development monitors that visited the project approximately sixteen times over eight months. The visits involved meetings with the project lead and beneficiaries. The monitors also had an introductory meeting with staff at KCCA.

The Wabigalo Youth General Merchandise (Mobile money business) goal was raising income of group members through mobile money services to the local community. It had fifteen participants at the beginning of the project. At time of writing (December 2021) this had reduced to two participants as the other participants preferred to work as individuals. The project has two Restless Development monitors that had approximately sixteen meetings with the project lead and the beneficiaries over an eight-month period.

The Nakinyuguzi Luwafu welding project's aim was to build the skills of community youth in metalwork and to increase their income. The project had seven trainees and five in the leadership committee. The committee included a chairperson of the group, a vice-chairperson, and a treasurer. The project had two Restless Development monitors who visited the project approximately twelve times in four months. The monitors also met three times with YLP staff at KCCA.

THE PROBLEMS IDENTIFIED

The project lead and the committee for the Kikaya Bakery projects reported to the monitors that they felt that the programme loan repayment time was too short and the amount to repay was too large. This caused the project a problem because money was not coming as planned because the COVID-19 lockdown reduced the bakery's sales, and the terms of repayment had not adapted to account for COVID-19.

The two Wabigalo Youth General Merchandise (Mobile money business) project beneficiaries reported to the monitors that a problem was that the renting of big space had become problematic during the COVID lockdown. The lockdown caused the business performance to significantly reduce, and the lack of income was causing them a challenge in repaying their loan. This was putting the business under pressure.

The project lead and two beneficiaries of the Nakinyuguzi Luwafu welding project also identified a problem caused by stagnation in sales and works. In addition to challenges repaying the programme loan they wished to have better access to KCCA's metal works contracts which were seen as providing income opportunities.

PROGRAMME FIXES

For all three projects the Restless Development youth volunteers arranged meetings between relevant KCCA staff and the project leads. For both the Kikaya Bakery and the Wabigalo Youth General Merchandise project it was agreed that their loans could be repaid in more instalments over a longer time.

In addition, for the Wabigalo Youth General Merchandise it was agreed that the business could set up on the roadside to reduce renting costs. For the Nakinyuguzi Luwafu welding project the KCCA have yet to respond to the requests for altering the loan conditions.

BENEFITS FOR THE COMMUNITY

The Kikaya Bakery project is still active and has become a community cake and confectionary making and skills training place with plans of registering as a training centre. So far it has trained 55 youth in bakery. A project member described how the change in loan conditions sustained the project: **“[the change in loan conditions] allowed our business to recover from the lockdown using some of the money to buy baking equipment and materials”**.

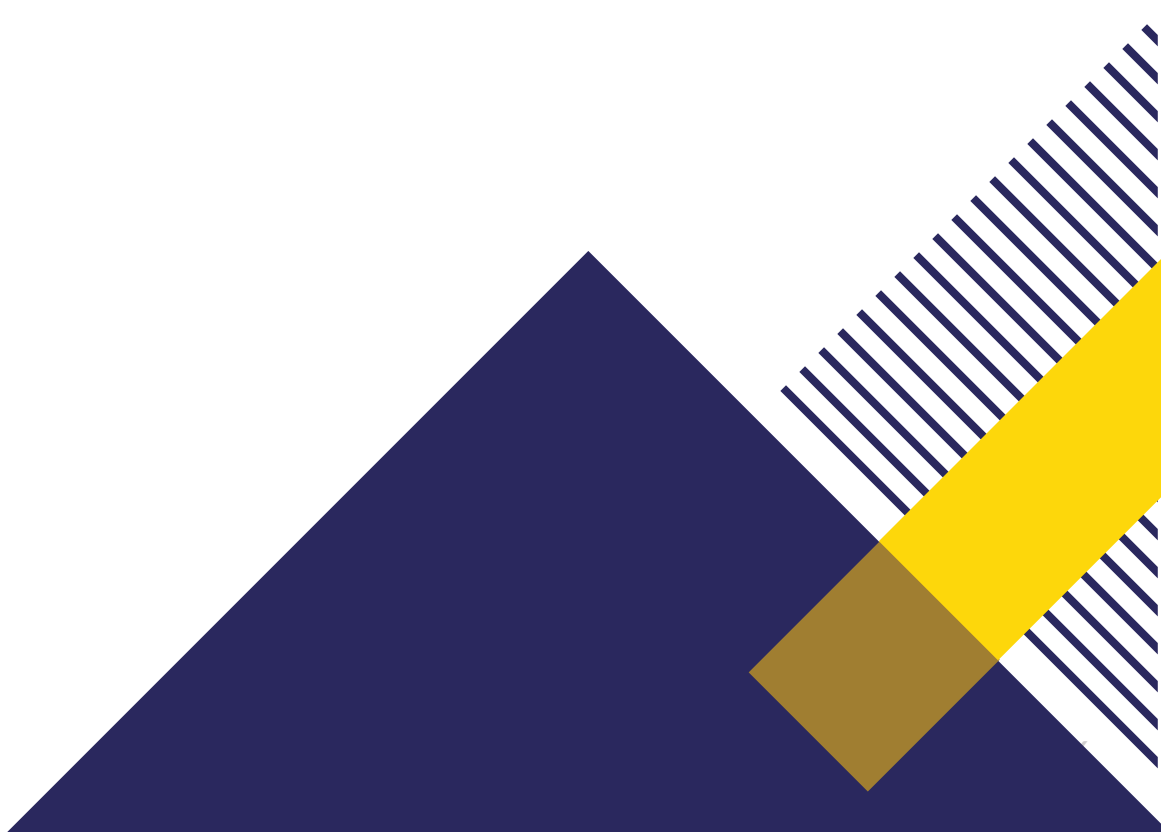
The Wabigalo Youth General Merchandise (Mobile money business) project is still active, and the two individuals hope to grow the business in 2022. One of the individuals shared that this ambition to expand **“is a result of the money we have saved on rent from operating outside of the former rented premises which was a result of the KCCA allowing us to work out of the premises and the repayment of the loan in more instalments over a long time”**.

The Nakinyuguzi Luwafu welding project has trained 15 youth in welding works. The project is not yet profitable, so the project lead and the committee are also using other sources of funds to keep it running.

ADDITIONAL OBSERVATIONS

The project leads from the Nakinyuguzi Luwafu welding project identified that the non-profitability of the business was mostly due to poor planning at the start: they felt it would have been better to ask for sufficient funds to enable them to buy equipment capable of handling big projects, which could have led to greater income opportunities. Additionally, KCCA has its own procurement policies that may not favour small businesses like this project.

We heard that the one project lead (unwillingly) had to pay a non-disclosed non-receipted sum (bribe) to one of the KCCA officials, so it is also possible that this contributed to the loosening of the loan conditions by the officials.



Methodology

The qualitative data to generate these case studies was gathered through semi-structured interviews with five youth monitors, seven project beneficiaries, five project leads and two staff members of the programmes. The topic guide and samples were developed by INTRAC in coordination with Restless Development. Tools were designed to understand whether and how the solutions generated by the monitoring of the development projects has contributed to improvement in the projects and benefits for community members. Additionally, follow up calls were made to gather more specific data for this case study.

Data was collected and analysed by Timothy Kisuule (INTRAC Associate), with additional support from Richard Ponsford (INTRAC) and Nestor Atukwatse (Restless Development Uganda).

The Development Alternative develops youth leaders who are able to work with credibility with communities and development actors to improve the way development projects are implemented at a local level.



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