



Open Contracting Improves Social Service Delivery in Uganda

Project Success Stories

March 2020



Acronyms

AFIC:	Africa Freedom of Information Centre
BoQs:	Bills of Quantities
CAO:	Chief Administrative Officer
DGF:	Democratic Governance Facility
FY:	Financial Year
GPP:	Government Procurement Portal
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
PDE:	Procuring and Disposing Entities
PPDA:	Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority
PPRA:	Public Procurement and Regulatory Authority
PRDP:	Peace Recovery and Development Plan
RDC:	Resident District Commissioner
RFQ:	Request for Quotations
UCMC:	Uganda Contracts Monitoring Coalition

DISCLAIMER:

The Success stories here within were documented from the "Improving Social Service Delivery to Citizens through Open Contracting in Uganda" Project with support from Democratic Governance Facility (DGF). Any errors of fact or omission contained herein are the sole responsibility of Africa Freedom of Information Centre (AFIC) (the Implementer) and views expressed in this report do not necessarily reflect the opinions of DGF.

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Foreword

An efficient social service delivery system requires public access to information, use of disclosed information by citizens to track service delivery, providing feedback to government and government acting on feedback from citizens. In the last two years, we have been working with government agencies, non-states actors and citizens to promote access to information and open contracting as a means of improving the delivery of social services in Uganda.

We thank the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) for the partnership and support to undertake “Improving Social Service Delivery to Citizens through Open Contracting in Uganda” Project that we implemented in six districts- Kabale, Kanungu, Ntungamo, Mbarara, Nebbi and Pakwach and also engaged national entities like PPDA, Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Planning, Ministry of Public Service, Ministry of ICT and National Guidance and Parliament of Uganda among others. We are also

grateful to the UCMC team that has been very supportive in the process of conducting nationwide consultations and implementation of this project.

At the upstream policy level, the project, successfully collaborated with PPDA to redesign the Government Procurement Portal and align it to the Open Contracting Data Standards- enabling it to hold large volumes of data and link data at various stages of the procurement cycle. We also collaborated with the Ministry of Public Service to mainstream open contracting in the Curriculum for the Uganda Civil Service College- making it possible for participants of the college to learn obligations and practices on disclosure and citizen participation in public contracting. We engaged Parliament and other stakeholders on the need to amend both the Access to Information Act to strengthen enforcement and oversight as well as the PPDA Act, 2013 to provide for mandatory disclosure and public participation.

At the lower downstream level, the project empowered citizens to understand their right to access information and monitoring public contracts. This has been impactful. Demand to access records increased tremendously- many had hitherto never made an information request, citizens actively tracked the execution of public contracts and quality of engagement with authorities improved considerably. Performance of contracts and services has improved.

Government agencies became responsive and accountable. They started proactively by disclosing procurement information or improved ways of disclosure, recruited or assigned staff to specialize in disclosing information, stolen property was recovered while contracts whose execution was unsatisfactory were redone. A strong foundation to institutionalize collaboration between CSOs and the government on monitoring of public contracts was laid at the local and national level.

We invite you to read this publication with insights on promoting the delivery of social services through open contracting in Uganda.

**GILBERT SENDUGWA,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**We thank the
Democratic Governance
Facility (DGF) for the
partnership and support
to undertake “Improving
Social Service Delivery
to Citizens through
Open Contracting in
Uganda”**

Introduction

Globally, governments spend approximately USD 9.5 trillion annually in public contracting¹. However, the rate of return on this investment is quite low because public procurement is faced with a myriad of challenges including ranging from collusion, fraud, diversion of funds, lack of public participation, absence of competition and lack of adequate oversight among others. The Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) estimates that every year 20% -30% of the value of the public contracts is lost through corruption alone². In Uganda, public expenditure has expanded several folds from UGX 7 trillion in Financial Year (FY) 2010/2011³ to 26.360 trillion in FY year 2016/17⁴ yet the quality and quantity of public services has remained about the same. An attribute to the poor services delivery has been lack of public participation in government projects resulting in poor alignment to citizens' needs and the ability to monitor government spending. It is believed that when citizens are involved in governance, governments become accountable and responsive.⁵ However accountability relies on transparency and the rule of law which involves the reciprocal exchange of information especially in contracts' management.

1 Dietrich Daniel (2016) <https://www.open-contracting.org/2016/12/09/countries-readiness-open-public-contracting/>

2 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development <http://www.oecd.org/gov/ethics/Corruption-Public-Procurement-Brochure.pdf>

3 Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Annual Budget Performance Report FY 2010/11, October 2011, p20. <http://budget.go.ug/budget/sites/default/files/National%20Budget%20docs/ABPR%20FY%202010-11.pdf>

4 Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Budget Framework Paper 2017/18 page 17 http://budget.go.ug/budget/sites/default/files/National%20Budget%20docs/Final%20BFP%20FY%202017_18.pdf

5 http://www.appam.org/assets/1/7/Going_Beyond_Service_Delivery_Exploring_the_Prevalence_of_Citizen_Participation_in_Government_Contracting.pdf

Sida, <https://africafoicentre.org/reports-and-publications/>

To that end, the Africa Freedom of Information Centre (AFIC) with support from the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) has been implementing the “Improving social service delivery to citizens through open contracting in Uganda” Project from March 2018 to March 2020. Primarily, AFIC believes that better disclosure of contracting data facilitates citizens’ access to information and participation in public procurement, and both elements contribute to realizing better value for money in public contracts. Open contracting is based on principles of disclosure of public procurement information, citizens’ participation in all stages of the public contracting process and acting on feedback by duty bearers. Through this project, AFIC worked at improving government responsiveness to citizens’ demand for public procurement information; enhancing citizens’ demand for public procurement information, and enhancing the government’s responsiveness towards citizens’ feedback on public procurement accountability issues.

The implementation of this project was undertaken in collaboration with the Uganda Contracts Monitoring Coalition (UCMC) to fulfill the project objectives in Mbarara, Ntungamo, Kabale, Kanungu, Nebbi and Pakwach two years. As the project has come to an end, we have documented some of the success stories that show the changes recognized as a result of its implementation. From the project implementation, both proactive and reactive disclosure levels have improved, the partnership between civil society and government for improved disclosure enhanced, citizens’ participation in contracts monitoring enhanced and capacity of government officials built. The success stories shared here within express a state of hope and enthusiasm and confirm that open contracting can indeed improve public procurement efficiency and overall service delivery.

From the project implementation, both proactive and reactive disclosure levels have improved, the partnership between civil society and government for improved disclosure enhanced, citizens’ participation in contracts monitoring enhanced and capacity of government officials built.



The District Procurement Officers, staff of the Civil Service College and the AFIC team take a group photo at the end of the training

Ministry of Public Service Mainstreams Open Contracting in the Curriculum of the Uganda Civil Service

Tumwesigye Albus is the Senior Procurement Officer for Ibanda district; one of the new districts recently created in the South Western part of Uganda. In as much as Albus has been practicing public procurement, one of the challenges he has been faced with is explaining to the public wherein the law is a requirement and why the procurement plan has to be displayed at the district notice board. Albus was able to raise this during the training of District Local Government Procurement Officers at the Civil Service College of Uganda where 14 procurement officers from the 10 new districts were trained in public procurement and contract management including open contracting.

The Ministry of Public Service through the Civil Service College of Uganda (CSCU) started a partnership with Africa Freedom of Information Centre (AFIC) to incorporate an Open Contracting Module in the Public Procurement and Contract Management Course for Public Servants. The College is responsible for in-service training, strengthening public policy research, providing advisory services and

supporting innovations for improved service delivery. CSCU's mandate is to build the capacities of Public Service institutions and human resources for improved performance in public service delivery. This comes through as one of the major milestones Uganda is taking in advancing open contracting in public procurement. The 14 procurement officers were thus the first cohort of public officers to be trained in the module for two days from 1st – 2nd October 2019 at the College based in Jinja district.



“We want to ensure that open contracting becomes a norm in all public procurement processes,” said Gilbert Sendugwa, the Executive Director, AFIC.

Having partnered with Public Procurement and Disposal Authority (PPDA) to redesign the Government Procurement Portal (GPP), AFIC realizes that there is a need to increase disclosure levels on the portal and inculcating open contracting in the norm of public procurement of Uganda.

In the 2018/19 financial year, there were 356 Procurement Entities (PEs) registered; of these only 228 were registered on the GPP, and of these 150 PEs disclosed information on the GPP. And yet only 66% of PEs registered on the GPP disclosed data on three stages of a procurement cycle (planning, tender and award). AFIC thus undertook the process of developing the module to ensure that public officers understand and appreciate the value of open contracting, the legal framework governing it and the stakeholders involved.

“We want to ensure that open contracting becomes a norm in all public procurement processes,” said Gilbert Sendugwa, the Executive Director, AFIC.

The training on open contracting was handled by Gilbert Sendugwa; Elone Natumanya; the Senior Programme Officer; Open Contracting and Michael Chengkuru; the Open Data Specialist who took the team through the process of open contracting and what should be disclosed at each stage of procurement. They further trained the officers on the need to conduct public procurement with a high level of integrity and following all the ethical values. The procurement officers were further trained in the overall public procurement and contract management by the PPDA officials.

“We have high hopes that the procurement practitioners will be able to put in practice what they have learned and promote transparency in public service in their localities,” Ronnie Kiwumulo Mbabaali, Programme Officer, Public Sector Governance at the Civil Service College noted.

And indeed, with this training, there are high hopes that the 14 new districts will be able to upload procurement data on the GPP and also disclose the information in other forms as required by the law.

“It has been a pleasure for me to be at the Civil Service College of Uganda because it has opened my eyes and I believe this will contribute positively to my performance as a member of the District Contracts Committee”, said one of the participants during the feedback session.

While closing off the training workshop, Ms. Savia Mugwanya the Commissioner in charge of the College appreciated the role of AFIC in championing open contracting in public procurement given its benefits in promoting transparency and accountability.

“We hope that you will be the champions of open contracting in your districts and impact other procurement practitioners,” she said.

So, public officers like Albus will no longer have to suffer answering why it is necessary to disclose information on public procurement but will be champions of open contracting in their respective districts.

“We hope that you will be the champions of open contracting in your districts and impact other procurement practitioners,” Savia Mugwanya said



Mr. Kushaba Anthony (right) during one of the trainings on Open Contracting and Access to Information held by AFIC

Citizens Access to Information Training Helps District Officials Deliver their Mandate

“If it wasn’t for AFIC, I wouldn’t be here as an Information Officer. The skills and knowledge of ATI and Open Contracting that I acquired through AFIC trainings while I was still in active journalism helps me every day in executing my duties. Through those skills, I can write stories on contract monitoring and other activities in the district on our new website.” said Anthony Kushaba the newly recruited Ntungamo District Information Officer.

Officers like Anthony are part of the stakeholders that benefitted from the capacity building that AFIC undertook to support local governments to improve on their public procurement through improved disclosure. Before Anthony was recruited as the district information officer, he was trained as part of the journalists whose capacity was built by AFIC in covering /writing quality stories about ATI and Open Contracting.

Since 2018, AFIC has been engaging District Local Governments on the need for compliance with the. AFIC facilitated processes that enhanced the effective implementation of the access to information laws through disclosure of procurement data, public participation, and feedback. And as such while working with Ntungamo and Kanungu districts, it was discovered that these two never had Information Officers at the start of the project.

As luck would have it for Anthony, upon advertising for this job, he was the best-suited candidate since he was already trained by AFIC in ATI and OC. In one of the meetings organized by AFIC, Mr. Anthony Kushaba acknowledged how the AFIC training built his confidence and expertise through which he was motivated to apply for the job.

He further says that he is now in charge of sharing information with the public and also encourages his colleagues in other departments to always share information with the public, especially the Procurement Office. And indeed he has always been very instrumental whenever AFIC wanted to access information from the district.

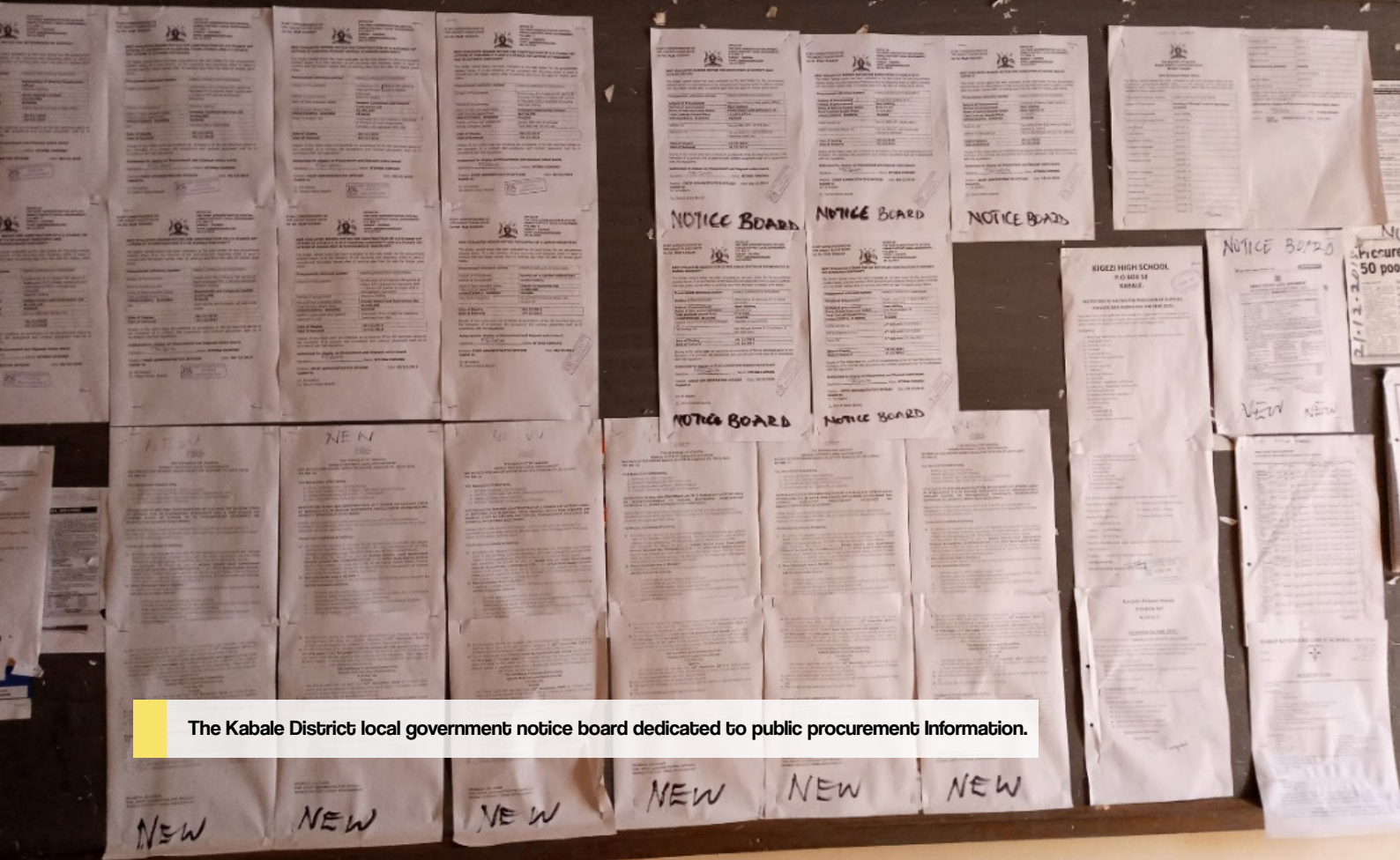
In Kanungu district, the Information Officer, Ms. Mwajuma Twongyeirwe used the acquired knowledge to mobilize heads of departments to participate in radio programs to educate/sensitize citizens on ongoing government programs while

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in Pakwach district officials used the knowledge and skills acquired to conduct four community Barazas to sensitize and provide citizens with information on the ongoing government projects.

Local Governments need to be made aware of the incentives to communicate with the public. Local governments often don't realize that communication is part of their job and is fundamental to their functioning. Government communication involves not only sending out persuasive messages to the public but also explaining working policies, creating awareness of the rights of citizens, government programmes and developing mechanisms that enable two-way communication between citizens and government. Through the recruitment of information officers, access to information for citizens is enabled and they can be able to demand accountability from duty bearers.

PROCUREMENT & DISPOSAL NOTICE BOARD



The Kabale District local government notice board dedicated to public procurement Information.

Disclosure of Procurement Information on Notice Boards and Agency Websites Improves

Access to information is one of the keys to democracy. When people seek and receive public documents, they can use them as critical tools for fighting corruption. Citizens equipped with information can exercise their fundamental human rights by participating in the demand for accountability and hence making governments more efficient.

As part of the process of implementing the project, AFIC in collaboration with the Uganda Contracts Monitoring Coalition (UCMC) in May 2019, undertook a contract monitoring process on the vital social services sectors; Health and Education to ascertain the performance of the contracts and effectiveness of service delivery and project implementation in Mbarara, Ntungamo, Kabale, Kanungu, Nebbi, and Pakwach districts in FY 2018/19. The levels of disclosure both proactively and reactively by PDEs; the participation of citizens in contracts' monitoring and the feedback generated by public officials about the reports were reviewed. The process analyzed the importance of disclosure of public procurement as an enabler of analyzing public procurement processes and holding duty bearers accountable. The reports generated were shared with the district officials with specific recommendations on areas of improvement.

For Kabale district, the feedback meeting was held on 22nd August 2019 at the district headquarters. The meeting was held with public officials to share findings and recommendations from the 1st contract monitoring process.

During the meeting, the district leadership made commitments which included; providing a separate noticeboard for public procurement information, updating the district website, and the Government Procurement Portal (GPP) to enable access to information on public procurement. They further committed to providing contract management information and appointing contract managers for every project; preparing a monthly report on all micro procurements undertaken by the district, providing bid evaluation reports for all district procurements; usage of more competitive procurement methods like domestic/open bidding; improving supervision on all public contracts executed in the district; and involving

REF: 13/02/2020

February 13th, 2020

The Chief Administrative Officer
Kabale District Local Government

Dear Sir,

Re: Contract Monitoring Findings and Recommendations

As the above subject matter refers;

On behalf of the Africa Freedom of Information Centre (AFIC),

I wish to extend our sincere appreciation to the Kabale District Local Government for embracing the ATI and OC interventions aimed at Improving social service delivery to citizens through open contracting in Uganda

AFIC conducted contracts monitoring exercise on ten projects undertaken by the district in the 2018/19 FY in collaboration with Uganda Contract Monitoring Coalition (UCMC) and the locally trained community monitors.

As you are aware, AFIC held a meeting with Kabale District Local Government on Thursday 22nd August 2019 to share findings and recommendations from the 1st contract monitoring report where the district made key commitments that included;

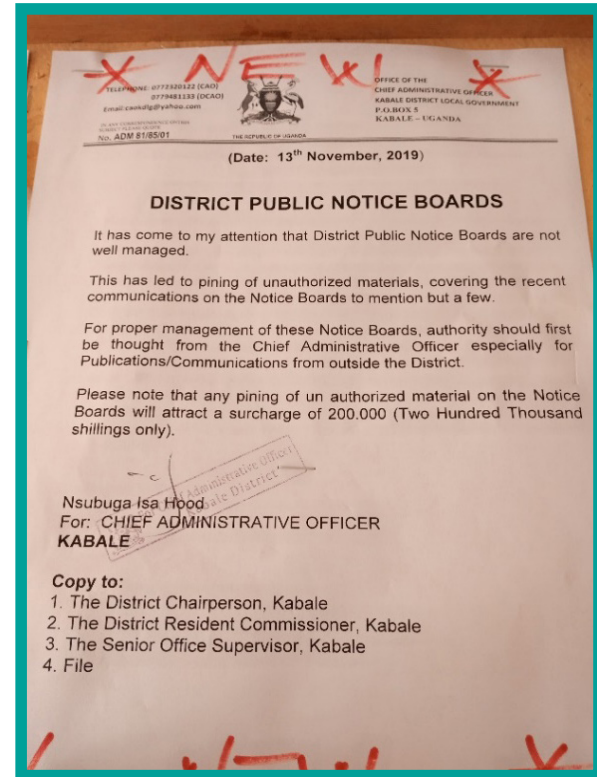
1. Having a separate noticeboard for public procurement information
2. Updating the district website, and the Government Procurement Portal (GPP)
3. Providing contract management information and appointing contract managers for every project.

AFIC letter to the Chief Administrative Officer highlighting key commitments made by the district after the 1st contract monitoring findings in August 2019

community members in the monitoring of public projects in the district.

It was also noted that fundamentally there was no separate noticeboard for displaying public procurement information as part of supporting proactive disclosure mechanisms. And thus, in October 2020, Kabale District Local Government made an effort to identify and mark a separate noticeboard for public procurement and disposal information. This was possible with the full support of the Deputy CAO; Mr. Nsubuga Hood who committed to ensuring compliance. The noticeboard is now being utilized to share public procurement information such as call for tenders, tender notices and best-evaluated bidders.

In the due process, it was observed that the procurement noticeboard was being used to display some other information other than its intended purpose. On that note, on November 13th 2020, the Deputy CAO issued a notice warning the public not to display unauthorized information on the district noticeboards. To that effect, during a follow-up meeting with the district officials in Kabale on 19th February 2020, the district leadership resolved to put a glass door on the same noticeboard by the end of June 2020.



The Senior Procurement Officer, Mrs. Mercy Atuheire, attributed this development to the initiative by AFIC to train them on the need for effective proactive disclosure. It has helped them to improve the timely sharing of public procurement information.

“We thank AFIC for the support it is giving us as a district and for opening our eyes on the need for ATI and Open Contracting. We can now see improvement in our work because we can create awareness of the public on what is happening in the district, especially around contracts,” said Mercy Atuheire.

The district did not stop at providing a separate notice for the display of procurement information but further designed and established a website, a move which depicted the willingness of the district to improve proactive disclosure. Besides, Kabale DLG designated Mr. Ndyabawe Swizen as the Acting Information Officer to ensure that the website had timely information uploaded. The Acting Information Officer thanked AFIC for the support and constant reminders to the district leadership to have a website. Mr. Ndyabawe indicated the website was an opportunity to inform the public on whatever is going on in the district, especially

government programmes.

In the same vein, Ntungamo district also established a website in 2019, after AFIC’s intervention. This improved the proactive disclosure of public information in the district.

Initially, accessing local governments’ procurement data was a challenge, some public officials had little knowledge about Access to Information and Open Contracting. They had never seen or used an information request form however with accessed ATI and OC knowledge among public officials through capacity building training and mentorship sessions, both reactive and proactive disclosure improved in Kabale, Kanungu, Ntungamo, Mbarara, Nebbi and Pakwach District Local Governments. Public officials can respond to accountability issues. Public officials across all the target districts now use the acquired ATI, OC and public procurement knowledge to effectively execute their work.

In Kanungu district, the Information Officer, Ms. Mwajuma Twongyeirwe used the acquired knowledge to mobilize heads of departments to participate in radio programs to educate/sensitize citizens on ongoing government programs. Whereas in Pakwach district, officials used the knowledge

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and skills acquired to conduct four community Barazas to sensitize and provide citizens with information on the ongoing government projects. This has greatly improved the relationship between citizens and local government leaders.

The Access to Information Act adopted in 2005 and the Access to Information Regulations prescribe how public information can be obtained. The Act under Section 16(1) requires public agencies to provide the requested information within twenty-one working days, other than proactive disclosure through public notice boards and websites. Also, the PPDA Act (amended 2011) in section 45 emphasizes that all public procurements should be conducted in accordance with the principles of transparency, accountability and fairness. This can be partly achieved through proactive disclosure of information on public procurement noticeboards and websites.

Citizens in Kabale, Nebbi, and Ntungamo can now access public procurement information with ease. The important thing to keep in mind is that citizens look at government websites for information that’s useful, timely, informative and up to date.



The Minister of Finance Planning and Economic Development; Hon. Matia Kasajja poses for a group phot with the Executive Director PPDA, Mr. Benson Tumuramyé and CSO Leaders. Behind the Minister is Mr. Gilbert Sendugwa; Executive Director AFIC

Africa Freedom of Information Inspires Government to Institutionalise Civil Society Monitoring of Public Contracts

On Thursday, October 31, 2019, Uganda's Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Hon Matia Kasaija launched a framework to enhance Public Procurement outcomes through effective collaboration between the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA), Procuring and Disposing Entities (PDEs) and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The launch took place at the opening of the Public Procurement Performance Review Forum held at Protea Hotel, Kampala. The Forum was held under the theme, "Strengthening Non-state Actor Participation in Monitoring Public Procurement Contracts for increased social accountability"

Speaking at the event, Mr. Kasaija said that the Government of Uganda spends 60% of the national budget through public contracting. However, lack of transparency and a host of other problems undermined the realization of value for money from public spending. Citing his own experience,

the minister said he had promised his constituents that Kakumiro road would be tarmacked and indeed he allocated funds for this purpose. However, the procurement process delayed for nearly three years and many citizens had branded him a liar because they didn't have information on the challenges the project was facing. He called upon PPDA and all procuring and disposing entities to provide communities with information on contracts being executed promptly.

The framework was developed by PPDA with active CSOs like AFIC who were consulted at forums held at District and National level. Through the framework, the government committed to proactively disclose information needed by civil society to support their monitoring of contracts.

While addressing over 200 stakeholders from government, civil society and development partners, Mr. Benson Turamy,

the Executive Director PPDA stressed the importance of civil society in enhancing public procurement outcomes through monitoring of contracts and providing feedback to government agencies for action. He noted that the initiative to institutionalize collaboration between PPDA, PDEs and respective CSOs was inspired by the work of AFIC who have monitored contracts and provided useful feedback to both PPDA and respective PDEs.

Sharing experiences of civil society, Gilbert Sendugwa, the Executive Director of AFIC and member of the Uganda Contracts Monitoring Coalition (UCMC) which is hosted at AFIC; noted that with support of the World Bank's Global Partnership for Social Accountability (GPSA), Hewlett Foundation and the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF), AFIC and UCMC had collaborated with the government in improving disclosure of procurement information by redesigning the Government Procurement Portal on better technology and

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in line with the Open Contracting Data Standards (OCDs). He reported that 39% of the recommendations by AFIC and UCMC had so far been implemented by PPDA and respective government Ministries and District Local Governments. These related to cost and time overruns, diversion of funds, shoddy works, poor execution of contracts, fraud, and collusion. He recommended that; Open Contracting (disclosure and citizen participation) should be mainstreamed in the PPDA Act and Regulations, all procuring and disposing entities should comply with obligations by consistently publishing data on the Government Procurement Portal; community members should be provided with copies of contracts regarding projects being implemented in their respective communities; Ministry of

Finance and Parliament should increase funding to PPDA; funding for performance monitoring and training should be boosted; implementation of CSO recommendations and feedback should be strengthened; training and funding for CSOs involved in contract monitoring should be enhanced.

Participants welcomed the initiative of the Government to expand and strengthen collaboration with civil society organizations in promoting value for money in public contracting. AFIC continues to further partner with PPDA in training PDEs and encouraging them to implement the recommendations given especially disclosure of procurement information on the GPP.



A community member makes a contribution during the community dialogue in Kanungu district

Community Monitoring Influences Local Government Action

Since the year 2018, AFIC has been training civil society organizations and community monitors on public contracts' monitoring. Before AFIC's interventions, the phenomenon of contracts' monitoring was unheard of and no citizen could relate to contract information. Through continuous coaching and mentoring, citizens have been equipped with the capacity to request and use contract information to monitor government projects.

The sustained interest and continuous vigilance of the residents in Matanda and Kasheregyeni sub-counties in Kanungu and Kabale districts respectively led to the demolition of sections of structures built using sub-standard materials during the upgrade of two health centers from level II to level III. The demolition of the structures arose from the contract monitoring engagements of community monitors trained by AFIC in contract monitoring.

MS. Riky Building Materials Ltd. entered into a contractual agreement with Kanungu District Local Government to upgrade Matanda Health Centre II to a Health Centre III facility. This agreement was signed on March 15, 2019 and

was expected to run for 6 months. The same company entered into a similar contractual arrangement with Kabale District Local Government to upgrade Kasheregyeni Health Centre II to a Health Centre III. It is at these two facilities that shoddy works on the walls and other sections of the brickworks were reported.

This construction firm was not new in these districts and had in the past taken advantage of citizens to 'cut corners' to save costs. It is believed that this was one of the reasons the community was interested in their work.

"AFIC had just been to Kanungu and Kabale districts preaching the gospel of open contracting, transparency, disclosure and the role citizens play in the successful delivery of public services," said Mathius Mwesige, the AFIC Programme Officer who spearheaded the training and mentoring of the community monitors.

Many of these concepts, though not new, were alien to the residents of Matanda and Kasheregyeni, because their leaders had not been a beacon in these principles when

dealing with contractors.

"We noticed the broken blocks after they had been used on the structure, on scrutiny, we saw others breaking up as they were set out to dry under the shed. By the time we instructed the company to remove the defective blocks and to stop using them, more than 600 blocks had already been made and were drying at the site. It is unclear why the contractor chose to make the concrete blocks at the site, and weak ones at that, but it could have been the quest for the contractor to make more profit at the expense of the beneficiaries," said Nelson Naturinda, the LC3 Chairperson for Kihiihi sub-county, in Kanungu district.

It is also reported that the contractor mixed the sub-standard materials with high-quality materials procured from Mbarara.

Naturinda added that this discovery prompted the district leadership to constitute a Health User Monitoring Committee where they tasked the chairperson of the committee to make regular visits to the construction site.

On his part, the site Engineer at Matanda Health Centre;

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Mr. Francis Ahabwe indicated that they noticed their mistake even before the community complained.

"I want to clearly state that we noticed the faulty blocks and started the process of replacing them before the community complained, all those blocks have since been removed and replaced under the supervision of all the concerned parties, we are a transparent entity," said Francis.

He added that despite signing the contract to start works on March 15, they started works at the facility on March 7, to maximize the time available which was wrong.

The two contracts managed by

Riky had initially been associated with elements of shoddy work resulting from the sub-standard building materials (blocks) that were being made on-site by the contractor, an issue that, according to Ahabwe was noticed two months after the start of the contract.

The Genesis

Community Monitors initially identified the use of poor quality building materials available at the site and those used in the construction during one of their contracts monitoring exercises. These gaps were identified at both sites in Kabale and Kanungu district, specifically sites being managed by Riky.

In Kanungu, these concerns were reported by the monitors to the Matanda LCIII chairperson who immediately notified the district engineer. The district engineer undertook a monitoring visit to the site to verify the findings. Several findings and recommendations resulted from this verification; i) demolition of some sections of the buildings at both sites effected, ii) the contractor to stop the manufacture of building materials at the sites iii) use of quality materials and only use blocks from Mbarara and iv)

have the Health User Management Committee chairperson to be stationed on-site every day to ensure the right mix of the right ratios.

Construction work was halted for 10 days to ensure the contractor adjusted to the new guidelines.

The contractor's behaviour was similarly observed during the contract monitoring at Kasheregyenyi Health Centre III. The monitors reported shoddy work to the Kabale Deputy RDC, who also monitored the construction site together with the district team. Similar recommendations were made by the Kanungu district engineer. After the district monitoring exercise, the Deputy RDC mentioned the findings and recommendations of the monitoring exercise during a radio talk show.

The contract monitoring exercise provided information that translated into actions that saved the taxpayer a great deal of money and emboldened citizens to have an active role in the management of public funds in their sub-counties. An action that would not have been achieved had the citizens in Kanungu ignored their civic rights to monitor public contracts.

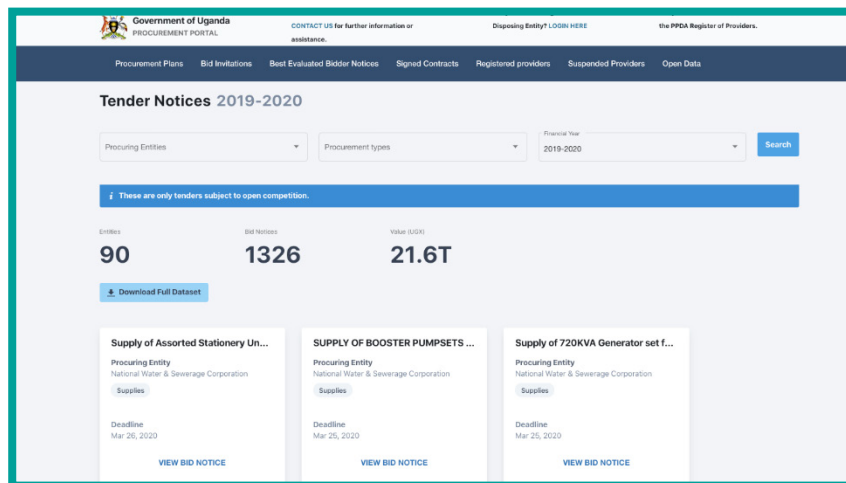
Define Stage (~20 mins)



AFIC Open Data Specialist Michael Chengkuru (In Black) explaining to Kenyan counterparts on how to upload data online during a training on Open Contracting

Government Procurement Portal Strengthened, Disclosure and Use of Procurement Data Improved

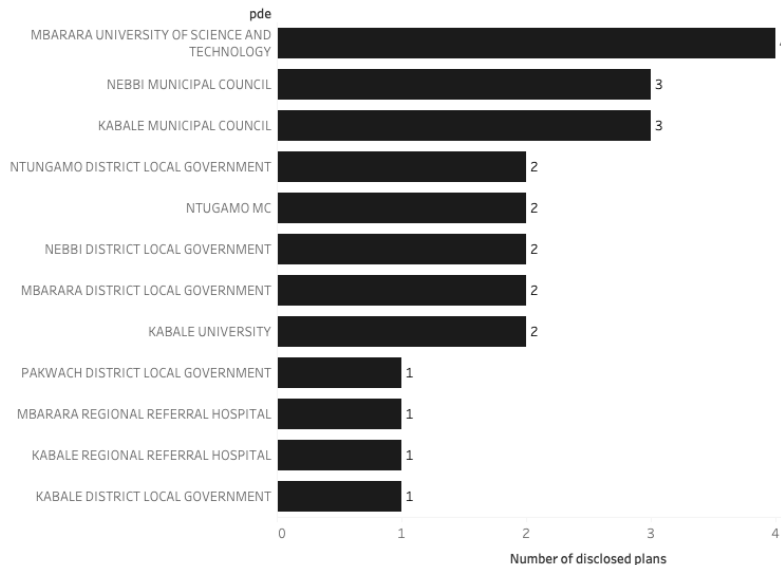
AFIC supported PPDA the successfully redesigned the Government Procurement Portal (GPP) and aligned it to Open Contracting Data Standards (OCDS); making Uganda the first African country to reach this fit. The website which went live in March 2019 was redesigned to accommodate the increased numbers of entities that must disclose public procurement information that is OCDS compliant and enable monitoring and production of reports that can be used to analyze the disclosed data.



To promote disclosure and use of the redesigned portal, the project trained 60 procuring entities and so far 147 procurement plans have been uploaded on the portal. Since the redesign, new entities have been registered on the GPP. The disclosure levels in the districts of engagement in the project also improved significantly. For instance in the FY2018/2019 none of the four districts, i.e. Nebbi, Mbarara, Ntungamo and Kable districts published the required procurement

information on GPP while Kanungu and Pakwach had not been added on the GPP. However in the FY2019/2020 there was noticeable improvement as 10 out of 14 procuring entities in the 6 districts of Nebbi, Mbarara, Ntungamo, Kable Kanungu and Pakwach disclosed procurement plans although they didn't disclose other documents like bid invitations, best evaluated bid notices and signed contracts. AFIC analyzes this data regularly and uses it to have informed engagements with the government based on the findings.

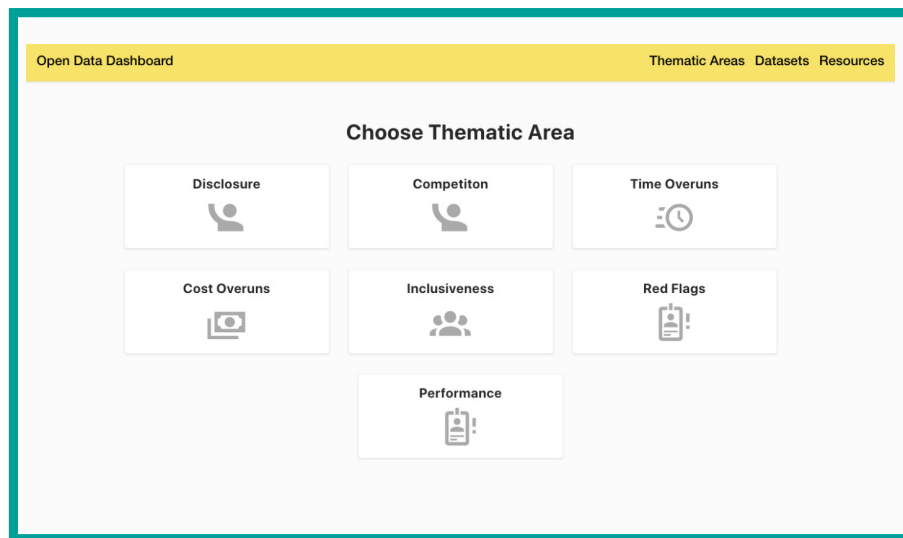
Entities with atleast one Procurement Plan since FY:2016/17



As a result of the redesign, for the first time, there is a framework and bulk procurement contracts added to the GPP. Additionally, PPDA plans to report on local content adoption and reservation schemes in this year's Performance Report using data captured primarily from the redesigned GPP. The redesign has inspired an eco-system of tools that consume GPP data, for instance, AFIC open-data dashboards, the electronic Infrastructure Monitoring Tool and the CoST Uganda

infra-data dashboards, which have been extensively reused for visual data analysis. Global Integrity, an international NGO, also uses GPP data to design its red flag dashboard.

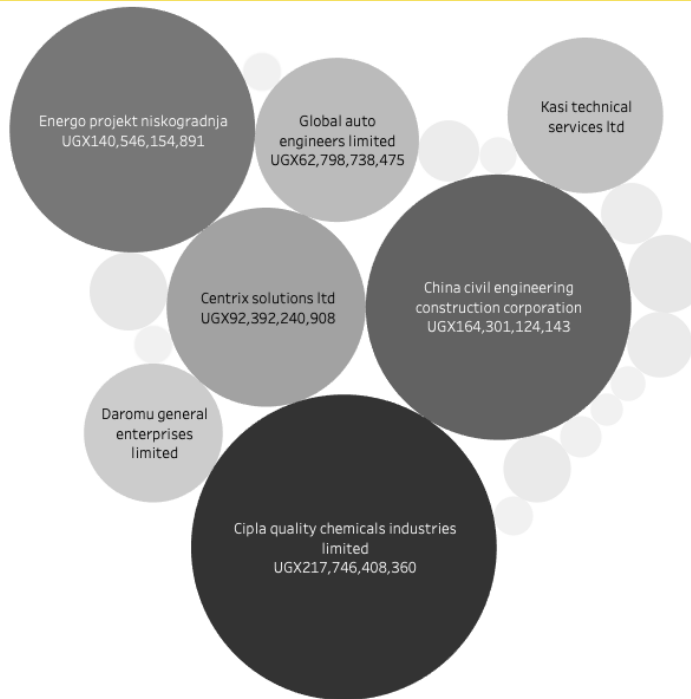
With the successful upgrade of the GPP, AFIC was invited to share lessons with PPRA Kenya on how to duplicate its workflow. The meeting was prepared on the backdrop of Kenya's government commitments to open contracting and to the OCDS in several international fora. The government of Kenya and PPRA in particular have worked aggressively to open up public contracting data to the private sector, citizens, oversight agencies and the government. Kenya has also taken significant strides in



making public procurement transparent, notably the launch of the newly redesigned Kenya Procurement Portal.

Data on the GPP can be used to inform and influence positive action towards improved service delivery by the policymakers and decision-makers. Several previous issues have been addressed by the newly upgraded GPP, which has led to increased demand from training entities. For instance, National Medical Stores and National Water and

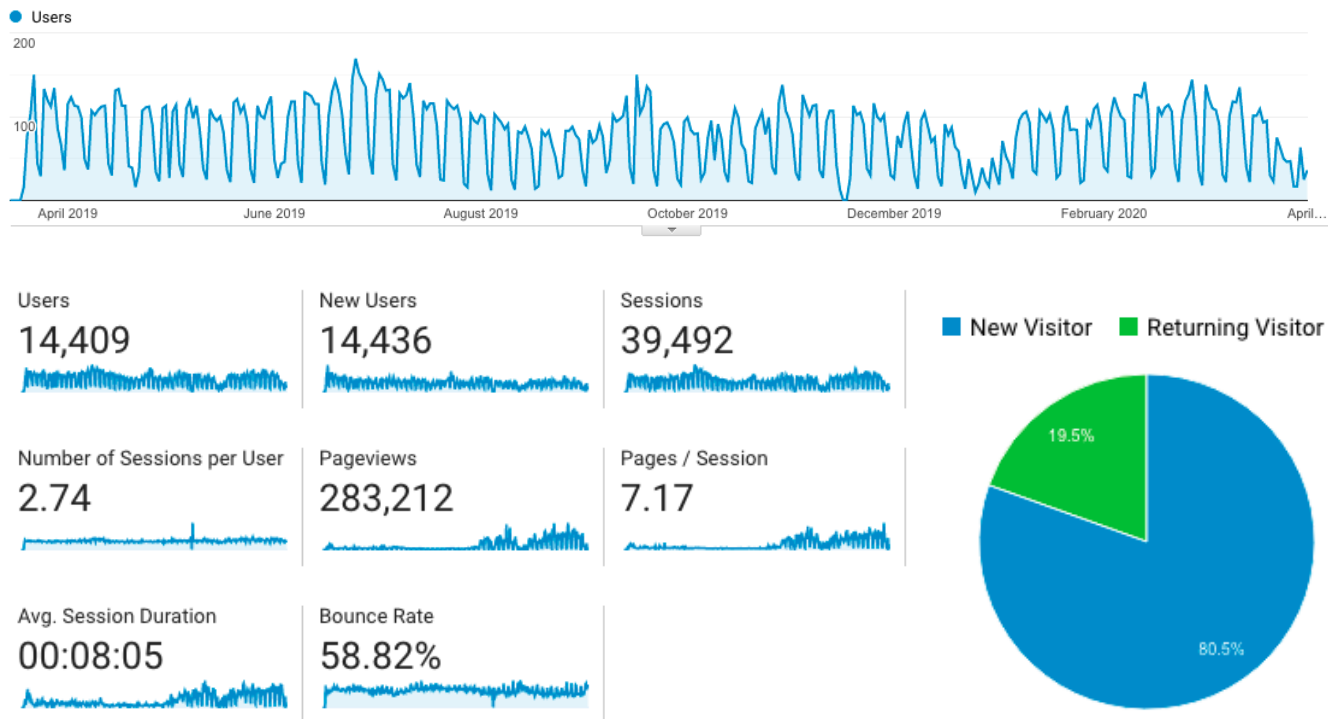
Who are the biggest players in the market?



An example of the data analysis AFIC displays on the dashboards

Sewage Corporation have requested AFIC to train their Procurement Officers which was not been the case before.

Since the launch of the redesigned portal, the GPP has had more than 13,000 unique visitors with an average seven-minute session duration. With e-GP on the horizon, PPDA is still pushing non-pilot entities to use the GPP and will later transit to e-GP which has a live uploading function.



GPP user engagement numbers in summary since it was redesigned



Thata division councilor in Nebbi District makes a comment during the community meeting

Information Request Leads to Recovery of Heifers from Leaders

In 2018, Nebbi district local government procured 331 Zeb heifers under Peace Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) cattle restocking program. In one of the council meetings, district councilors made a malicious resolution for each councilor to receive a heifer under the pretext of creating a model that compares the survival rates of animals distributed to leaders and the citizens.

In 2019, AFIC trained public officials, civil society actors, journalists and community monitors on access to information and open contracting. These various categories of stakeholders acquired skills on how to request for public information and how the information acquired can be used to advocate for the improved social services delivery. Public officials were reminded of their obligation to share information, both proactively and reactively to the public as stipulated in the Access to Information Act, 2005.

Arising from numerous complaints from the citizens about the leaders' actions and the criteria used to select other beneficiaries for the Zeb Heifer project, Kennedy Blaimo a community monitor made an information request to the CAO to ascertain the actual

beneficiaries, number of animals procured and distributed. The application was not accepted.

During the Nebbi district CSOs' follow-up meeting in 2019, CSO leaders requested AFIC to seek information from the district leadership about the status of the animals procured ever since Kennedy made the information request. AFIC secured a meeting with the district leadership for which the issue was discussed. It was discovered that the entire process of selection and distribution was not documented.

The open contracting principles that call for disclosure of public procurement information and citizen participation at every stage of procurement and following the leaders' code of conduct while handling public procurement that was not followed. The Local Government, 1997 provides for a minimum standard of behavior and conduct for leaders while executing government business that was compromised.

In the same meeting, AFIC learned that on January 17th, 2020, Mr. Brown Choothum, an LC5 Councilor intercepted and hijacked eight heifers at Adjara junction as they were being transported

to Erussi sub-county headquarters to be distributed to the beneficiaries. The matter was reported to the police and he was arrested and detained at Nebbi Central Police Station (CPS) for allegedly hijacking cattle meant for beneficiaries under the PRDP cattle restocking program. The Nebbi District Chairperson, Mr. Emmanuel Orombi confirmed that he had received a report indicating that two of the animals were sold to non-beneficiaries by the councilor. He also confirmed that the district officials rejected attempts by Mr. Choothum's father to pay for the hijacked animals because all they wanted to be the animals but not money. It was also discovered that the Councilor had solicited some money from members of the community in exchange for the animals.

According to the OC CID Nebbi CPS Mr. Nicholas Natajja, after the interception, the Councilor was advised to take back the animals which he did not do, prompting his arrest to help police in investigations. Mr. Natajja said Choothum later admitted that he knew the whereabouts of the animals, and all the eight cows were recovered over the weekend and handed over to the rightful beneficiaries.

"Following numerous complaints from the registered beneficiaries who had not received their animals, we had no option but to only arrest the Councilor to help in the recovery process," Mr. Natajja said.

Mr. Christopher Omara, the Nebbi RDC on his part, said his office would not tolerate leaders who are working to sabotage government programs for selfish gains.

"Such a dubious act by the Councilor is unacceptable. The district shall do whatever it takes to see that such leaders are dealt with under the law to see sanity," Omara warned. Mr. Brown Choothum was later released on police bond.

Access to information is a powerful tool in the fight against corruption. It serves both the government and its citizens by increasing confidence, through enhanced transparency and accountability. Citizens can use their fundamental rights and hold their leaders accountable for responding to their needs and providing quality services. Community Monitors used their constitutional rights as stipulated in Article 38 Civic Rights and Activities which states that every Ugandan citizen has the right to participate in the affairs of government, individually or through his or her representatives in accordance with the law. Indeed the people of Nebbi can now benefit from government services like the PRDP cattle restocking program given their vigilance.



Members of the media, civil society and community monitors pose for a photo after the meeting

Civil Society Organisations, Community Monitors and the Media Agree to Work Together to Promote Open Contracting in Kanungu District

In the past years, there was limited strategic collaboration between citizens, the civil society and the government in Kanungu district. This created a gap as far as citizen participation is concerned. In August 2019, AFIC undertook several interventions in select districts, Kanungu included.

AFIC brought together members of civil society, Community Monitors and the media to talk about sustainable ways of increasing citizen participation in monitoring public contracts for better service delivery. AFIC had been training local citizens on the importance of open contracting and how they could get involved.

In the discussions, it was quite clear that CSOs, Community Monitors and the media entirely believed that they could only achieve much when they worked together. Kanungu NGO Forum, through the chairperson of the board committed to reaching out to as many NGOs/CBOs as possible, encouraging them to pay attention to issues that affected citizens, especially regarding service delivery.

Community Monitors strongly believe that it's equally the responsibility of citizens to concern themselves with what goes on around government implementation of public contracts. Kanungu Community Monitors are willing to pass on their valuable skills acquired in contract monitoring to other citizens in their localities.

The media in Kanungu pledged full support towards amplifying community voices and providing space for citizens to talk about issues identified in contract monitoring. During one of the follow-up meetings in Kanungu district, the journalists

requested that CSOs and Community Monitors always involve them in the field monitoring visits to enable them to capture the findings. These shaped debates on radio and television talk-shows.

As a way of pushing the agenda forward, they resolved towards selecting a committee with representatives of various sub-counties in Kanungu district. It was tasked to mobilize more CSOs and citizens to actively participate in monitoring public contracts and also hold their leaders accountable. A WhatsApp group was formulated for effective information sharing and coordination of the members and it was named Citizens Participation in Inclusive Development (CPID).

CPID Forum is a local citizens' initiative in Kanungu that will bring together all people from diverse backgrounds to deliberate and participate in better governance, better service delivery and inclusive development through the use of open contracting. The forum is composed of civil society organizations, community monitors, local leaders and the media in Kanungu district.

Ivan Mushana, selected as the chairperson of the forum, appreciated AFIC for creating a wider awareness of the people's right of access to information so they could fully participate and play a collective role in ensuring better service delivery which also helped to reduce corruption cases in Uganda and Kanungu district in particular.

In a democracy, citizens have the right to be heard, the right to form associations and the freedom of speech. AFIC continues to build the capacity of citizens across Uganda in contract monitoring so they can be able to hold their leaders accountable for improved service delivery. When citizens work together, they can achieve more.



A group photo taken during the OCP-PPRA meeting in Kenya where AFIC was invited to share experience in Open Contracting



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