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LOCAL GOVERNMENT COUNCILS' PERFORMANCE AND PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN UGANDA

Buliisa District Council Score-Card Report FY 2013/2014



Wanseko fish landing point at the northern tip of lake Albert in Buliisa district (Credit: Oil in Uganda)

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BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

This policy brief presents findings from the 2013/14 assessment of Buliisa District Local Government under the Local Government Councils' Score-card Initiative (LGCSCI), an evidence based project implemented by ACODE in partnership with ULGA with support from DGF. It seeks to enhance the effectiveness of elected leaders in fulfilling their mandate and build the citizens' capacity to demand better services. The initiative is implemented in 30 districts, including Buliisa which was being assessed for the fourth time. The initiative uses the score-card – an assessment

tool - to facilitate annual performance assessments on the district council, district chairperson, speaker and councillors with focus on their roles and responsibilities as stipulated in the Local Government Act CAP 243 (as amended).

The annual assessment process is conducted by teams of researchers across the 30 districts partaking in the LGCSCI assessment. The research process involves a review of key district documents, interviews with key respondents and consultations with citizens through focus group discussions (FGDs). Following the data collection process, data is cleaned and analysed to identify key themes and patterns wherein a district report detailing the findings is produced for each of the assessed districts (full reports are available online; <http://www.acode-u.org/>). LGCSCI also produces and disseminates a 'National Synthesis Report' that

provides trends analysis for all 30 of the assessed districts. Both reports are disseminated nationally with districts receiving copies of both their specific reports and copies of the National Synthesis Report.

OVERVIEW OF BULIISA DISTRICT DURING FY2013/14

Buliisa district was managed by the political and technical leadership which complement each other. The political leadership was headed by Hon. Fred Lukumu assisted by 16 councilors including the speaker Hon. Didan R. Amama who provided an oversight role and monitored development projects to ensure quality service delivery. The technical leadership on the other hand was led by Mr. Patrick Otto Langoya as the Chief Administrative officer, together with a team of heads of departments provided technical guidance and implemented lawful council resolutions to provide services to the citizens.

Buliisa District lies in the Albertine Grabben with rich eco-system. It has several oil wells of commercial quantities that attracted Tullow Uganda Oil and Total E&P oil companies undertaking oil and gas exploration in the district. The bigger part of the land area of the district is covered by Murchison Falls National Park, Bugungu Game Reserve and Budongo Forest. Human settlement is confined to a smaller proportion of the land area. Despite this challenge, the population of the district has been growing over the years with an average annual growth of 2.7 per cent (UBOS 2013).

Figure 1: Citizens check quality of road works at Kalolo Songalendu road in Western Ward, Buliisa Town Council



Photo Credit: ACODE Digital Library.

Agriculture is the main economic activity in the district with over 45 per cent of the population depending on subsistence farming as the main source of livelihood. The district has strong investment potential, in hospitality and tourism; it needs to position itself strategically to tap the benefits in the oil industry by organizing the citizens into production and marketing groups.

Buliisa District has continued to register progress in service delivery since its creation in 2006. Significant improvements have been registered in the roads sub-sector with a number of feeder roads and community access roads having been opened up. This is attributed to a combined effort by the district and oil companies operating in the district which has led to an increase in the cost of land especially in the urban areas. However due to the sandy nature of the soils, the roads tend to develop potholes after a short period and the roaming animals on the roads have contributed to the destruction of murrum roads. This has been exacerbated by the poor quality of culverts and the manner in which they are dotted with abnormally high mounds - inconvenience to the road users.

There was a decline in completion rate as only 1,207 pupils registered for PLE in 2013 compared to 1,453 in 2011. The teacher-pupil ratio stood at 1:87; much below the national ratio. The district was faced with various challenges including limited staffing, inadequate facilities, low pass rates in PLE and limited participation of parents.

Figure 2: An overcrowded classroom at Nyamasoga primary school



Photo Credit: ACODE Digital Library

FACTORS AFFECTING SERVICE DELIVERY IN BULIISA DISTRICT

- a) **Budgetary Constraints:** Local revenue was relatively poor as a result of limited revenue sources, resistance of taxpayers to meet their tax obligations, ignorance of taxable items by taxpayers and low-income peasants who make up a big proportion of the population with a low taxable capacity.
- b) **Central government grants were not released as per the IPF:** Less money was received (the budget performed at 84 per cent), and there was no mechanism for deficit financing of the planned activities for the Financial Year.

- c) **Limited staffing, support supervision as well as operations and maintenance (O&M):** The major service delivery sectors such as roads and water received 13 per cent and 38.4 per cent respectively of the planned budget constraining the department in providing support supervision and timely operations, repairs and maintenance of equipment and water sources.
- d) **Issues related to procurement, poor contract works and accountability:** There were instances of delayed procurement processes. This was attributed to inadequate staffing; funds released did not match the procurement plan, and conflict of interest in the procurement process compromising the professional ethical code of conduct.
- e) **Limited monitoring of Service Delivery:** Several councillors did not carry out their monitoring role and if they did, they did not document their experiences. It was common to find a councillor's name in the visitor's book of the service delivery unit when the councillor never spent time to understand the challenges faced by the unit.
- f) **Limited contact with electorate:** The failure by electorate to understand the roles and responsibilities of political leaders and councillors in particular greatly affected the councillors' role of contact with electorate. The electorate had diverse expectations from their councilors. These excessive demands discouraged the councilors from carrying out this role.

SCORE-CARD PERFORMANCE

The score-card parameters are derived from the mandate of the organs assessed as stipulated in the Local Governments Act (as amended). While all the four categories are evaluated on their legislative and monitoring functions, the district chairperson, speaker and council are assessed against additional roles. As the political head of the district, the district chairperson is also assessed on their political leadership as well as initiation and participation in projects in their electoral area. The speaker is assessed primarily as a councillor with an additional function of presiding and preservation order in council. The district council, which is the highest organ in the district, is also assessed against the core function of planning and budgeting as well as providing accountability to citizens.

Table 1: Buliisa District Council Score-card FY 2013/14

		2011/12	57	100	
Trends in Performance	2011/12		57	100	
	2012/13		60	100	
	2013/14		33	100	
	% change		-45		
Parameter	Indicator	Score	Max Score	Explanatory Remarks	
LEGISLATIVE ROLE	Rules of Procedure	2	2	Rules of procedure adopted. No evidence of payment as subscription for membership was made to ULGA. DEC sat 12 times. However, there was no evidence of Ordinance passed, conflict resolution and public hearing held. Inter-district tours conducted in Kabarole and Kasese districts but there was no evidence of report and follow-up actions.	
	Membership to ULGA	0	2		
	Committees of Council	1	3		
	Motions passed	1	3		
	Ordinances	0	3		
	Conflict Resolution	0	1		
	Public Hearings	0	2		
	Legislative resources	1	4		
	Petitions	0	2		
	Capacity building	2	3		
Sub total		7	25		
ACCOUNTABILITY TO CITIZENS	Fiscal Accountability	3	4	Evidence of Internal Audit and PAC reports submitted to council. However, there was no evidence of having discussed them. There was evidence of transfer of revenue to LLG - funds received are displayed on the notice boards. However, no district clients' charter.	
	Political Accountability	3	8		
	Administrative Accountability	6	8		
	Involvement of CSO	2	2		
	Principles of accountability	0	3		
	Sub total		14		
PLANNING & BUDGETING	Plans, Vision and Mission	4	5	Approved budget available. Revenue enhancement plan was in place though there was no evidence of the district engaging central government on revenue enhancement.	
	District Budget	4	4		
	Local Revenue	2	11		
	Sub total		10		
MONITORING SERVICE DELIVERY ON NPPAS	Education	0	5	This parameter was poorly performed by the district. No evidence was provided to confirm the visits made apart from the areas of FAL and Environment.	
	Health	0	5		
	Water and sanitation	0	4		
	Roads	0	4		
	Agriculture	0	4		
	FAL	1	4		
	ENR	1	4		
	Sub total		2		

Table 2: Chairperson's Score-card FY2013/14

Fred Lukumu		NRM		
Trends in Performance	2011/12	56	100	
	2012/13	70	100	
	2013/14	55	100	
	% change	-27		
Parameter	Indicators	Score	Max Score	Explanatory Remarks
POLITICAL LEADERSHIP	DEC	2	3	Four (4) were meetings held but only minutes for one were obtained.
	Monitoring admin	4	5	
	State of affairs	1	2	
	Oversight civil servants	3	4	
	Commissions/Boards	2	2	
	Central gov't	4	4	
	Sub Total	16	20	
LEGISLATIVE ROLE	Council	2	2	Attended 4 council sittings. 3 motions were passed to approve the budget. No evidence of presenting bills to council.
	Motions Executive	4	6	
	Bills by Executive	0	7	
	Sub Total	6	15	
CONTACT WITH ELECTORATE	Meetings Electorate	5	5	There was evidence meetings recorded in his diary. Appeared on radio to mobilize communities on national programmes
	Issues by electorate	5	5	
	Sub Total	10	10	
PROJECTS	Projects Initiated	3	3	Extension of piped water at Ngwedo trading centre. Signed MoUs with community.
	Communal Projects	2	2	
	NGOs	5	3	
	Sub Total	10	10	
MONITORING SERVICE DELIVERY ON NATIONAL PRIORITY PROGRAMME AREAS	Agriculture	2	7	Apart from FAL that was not monitored, other activities were monitored but there was no evidence of monitoring reports and follow up actions.
	Health	2	7	
	Schools	2	7	
	Roads	2	7	
	Water Sources	2	7	
	FAL	0	5	
	Environment	3	5	
	Sub Total	13	45	

Table 3: Speaker's Score-card FY 2013/14

Name	Hon. Didan Amama R.			
District	Buliisa			
Political Party	Independent			
Constituency	Ngwedo			
Gender	M			
Terms	1			
Trends in Performance	2011/12	31	100	
	2012/13	65	100	
	2013/14	32	100	
	% change	-51		
Parameter	Indicator	Score	Max Score	Explanatory Remarks
Legislative Function	Chairing council	3	3	Chaired at least 4 meetings and delegated at least once. Chaired Business committee held meetings at least 6 times. Records of motions and petitions were available. However, there was no evidence of the speaker providing special skills to guide council/committee.
	Rules of procedure	4	9	
	Business Committee	3	3	
	Records book	0	2	
	Record of motions	0	3	
	Special skills	2	5	
Sub Total	12	25		
Contact with Electorate	Meetings Electorate	4	11	Community meetings were held and official communication provided to the electorate on service delivery. The speaker had an office where his electorate meet him.
	coordinating center	2	9	
	Sub Total	6	20	
LLG	Participation in LLG	4	10	Did not attend at least 4 LLG meetings.
Monitoring NPPAs	Health	1	7	The speaker did fairly well under this parameter in almost all the NPPAs.
	Education	1	7	
	Agriculture	1	7	
	Water	1	7	
	Roads	1	7	
	FAL	1	5	
	Environment	4	5	
	Sub total	10	45	

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVED SERVICE DELIVERY

The report recommends that, among others:

1. Government should increase budgetary allocation for Buliisa District Local Government to meet service delivery priorities.
2. Council therefore needs to initiate ways of increasing local revenue so as to improve on the 20 per cent threshold meant for council.
3. There is need to recruit key administrative staff that can offer leadership and supervision to ensure efficiency in service delivery.
4. Institutionalize the practice of production of monitoring reports by the elected leaders.
5. Include more capacity building initiatives for council members/elected leaders in areas of legislation, drafting motions/bills, report writing, record keeping and minute taking.

The full report on these findings can be accessed on ACODE's online information center at:

<http://www.acode-u.org/>

About the Authors

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