

VOLUNTEER REPORT

Assignment: UG25

TABU INTEGRATED COOPERATIVE SOCIETY

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The assignment was to provide technical assistance to the members of TABU in order to build the capacity of its members in the management of their savings and credit groups. The assignment went from 24 November to 17 December, 2014 (for a total of 24 days worked).

The original goal and objectives of the assignment were:

Build the capacity of saving and credit schemes among farmer members of TABU, by establishing procedures to run an efficient village savings and loan scheme that best serves the interests of members.

- The members of the cooperative will have understood the rationale behind group savings and credit management.
- Management will be better equipped with business development/entrepreneurship skills.
- Members' capacity to manage group funds and enhance accountability will have increased.

Subsequent to the first discussion on the 25th November between TABU, the Volunteer, and the FtF Program Coordinator, the goal and objectives were modified to reflect the work that would be completed.

Goal: *Build the capacity members of TABU's Farmers' Groups to manage their lidulis (saving and credit groups).*

Objective 1

Ensuring that liduli members understand the importance of group savings and how to save.

- **Progress with the objective** – Currently, the *lidulis* operate on a 12-month cycle of savings, giving the money out to its members, then returning the savings to their members plus interest on loans (if applicable), in December so members may pay for food and clothes for the holidays. This does not allow for the building of wealth and actually hurts its members. The introduction of the concepts of short-term (voluntary / *kukwiwayo*), long-term (required / *gaganiwa*), and complementing their already existing social/education funds, (insurance / *kulinda*), along with the idea that the process does not end after 12 months and restarts with month 1, but rather it continues to month 13, 24, 25,... will allow for the building of wealth.
- **Expected impacts/results** – If the *lidulis* make the change to long-term savings, the result will be building of wealth for themselves, their "village banks", and their communities.
- **Recommendations** – Continue on-going sensitization and promotion of the transformation from 12-month *lidulis* to long-term village bank, and the adoption of the three (3) savings products.

Objective 2

Building members' capacity in managing loan funds and enhancing accountability.

- **Progress with the objective** – Most of the *lidulis* are loaning out the funds (some are not lending but operating as a *tontine*) for business, farming, or school fees from 50,000 – 200,000, for one month at 10% interest, deducted prior to disbursing the loan to 1-2 people at a time, depending on how much they have in savings/shares. Thus, the richer members get the loans, the annual rate of interest is 120% (APR is 154%) and this hurts rather than helps, and men are taking loan, sometimes at a higher amount than the women, and members do not have enough time to build capital in their businesses due to the short loan period. It was proposed that the *lidulis* create a loan fund (*ligobi*) from 6 months of required savings (*gaganiwa*) that will continue to grow over time (every 6 months, one more "share").

- **Expected impacts/results** – A stable loan fund, allowing more people to access loans, for higher amounts of credit, for longer loan periods, which in turn will lower interest rates, thus building wealth in the “village bank” and assisting its members to also build personal wealth.
- **Recommendations** – Continue on-going sensitization and promotion of the transformation from 12-month *lidulis* to long-term village bank, and the adoption of the creation of a loan fund (*ligobi*).

Objective 3

Equipping management with skills to manage the lidulis.

- **Progress with the objective** – Three (3) two (2)-day training sessions were held initially whereby 1-3 representatives from each of the Farmers’ Groups (FGs) came to the TABU office from 10:00am – 13:00pm. Since each 2-day training was independent, different members were encouraged to attend. Training 1 was information gathering about the TABU Member Groups (12 long-term and 9 newer FGs for 21 FGs in total) and sharing information about different types of savings/credit models, and types of savings and loan products offered throughout Uganda. Training 2 focused on defining “policy” and “procedures” and savings products, how to build wealth through long-term savings, and why savings is cheaper than credit. Training 3 was a review on “policy” and “procedures”, a discussion on how to create a loan fund (*ligobi*) and the advantages of doing so, and a discussion on the types of loan (credit products) that the FGs could offer to their members.

Based on the lessons learned by the Volunteer during the initial training sessions, a second series of training sessions took place in the villages with 2-3 FGs per training for all members of the *lidulis* on the “Five (5) Keys to Building Wealth” (Training 4). These trainings focused on the image of the locked cash boxes kept by most of the *lidulis* and included: Cooperatives, Training/Education, Savings, Loans/Loan Fund, and Business/Income-generating Activities development (6 steps). During this time, the more dynamic individuals identified by the Volunteer were requested to participate in the training sessions in order to be trained as trainers/promoters and over time, they took on more responsibility for the training sessions.

- **Expected impacts/results** – Fourteen (14) FGs sent representatives to participate in the initial 3 Training Sessions. Seventeen (17) FGs were visited and received training on “the 5 Keys to Building Wealth”. Four (4) women and one (1) man were trained as trainers/promoters.
- **Recommendations** – The Trainers/Promoters will continue to provide on-going sensitization and promotion of the transformation from 12-month *lidulis* to long-term village bank, and the adoption of the creation of a loan fund (*ligobi*) to member groups, and in turn, identifying and developing trainers/promoters in each of the FGs.

ACTION PLAN

The Volunteer believes that the goal of the action plan will result in at least 300 women and men in the Bulambuli District will have increased their personal, Farmers’ Groups, and Communities’ wealth over the next two years by participating in short-term, long-term and emergency savings schemes, and/or accessing affordable loans through their groups’ loan fund.

RECOMMENDATION	SPECIFIC ACTION	RESPONSIBLE PERSON	BY WHEN
1) Translate “How to Transform a <i>liduli</i> to a Village Bank (VB)”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete translation into Lugisu Scan and send via email to Juliana (jwrr@aol.com) skype address: (jwrrco) Juliana will put together the manuals and send to Maria at FtF for printing FtF will facilitate a follow-up training in Mbale via Skype with Juliana (with manual) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mme. Florence to identify translators and oversee the process for translation and scanning Juliana will coordinate with Maria at FtF Maria and Mme. Florence will coordinate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Translation by end of January 2015 Manual completed by end of February 2015 Training session in mid-March
2) Sensitization on using Required, Voluntary, and/or Emergency Savings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lead trainers should identify 1-2 VB promoters in each FG and provide training/support The trainers and promoters will continue to support groups that choose to adopt the savings products 	Mmes. Florence, Grace, Betty, & Justine & Mr. Simon to coordinate and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification December 2014 & January 2015 Follow-up and support December 2014 and on-going
3) Sensitization on the benefits of creating a loan fund (<i>ligobi</i>)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lead trainers should identify 1-2 VB promoters in each FG and provide training/support The trainers and promoters will continue to support groups that choose to create a loan fund 	Mmes. Florence, Grace, Betty, & Justine & Mr. Simon to coordinate and support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identification December 2014 & January 2015 Follow-up and support December 2014 and on-going
4) Leverage training opportunities	All members of the Farmers' Groups will explore their networks to find appropriate training opportunities for their members.	Sub-committee elected by the TABU member groups will coordinate	Sub-committee elected by end of January 2015 and responsibilities are on-going

Recommended Capacity-building Training for TABU

I believe that my intervention on savings/credit was premature as the organization is still in the “form” stage of its development. Therefore, I would propose the following capacity building interventions for TABU over the next few years to support them in their development.

- ❖ Cooperatives Management and Leadership Training (institution building) – Currently, the *lidulis* is the reason for the creation of the FG, and as trust grows amongst its members, other activities such as supporting each other during ceremonies (funds, food, physical presence), labor *tontine*, renting land and working it together for profit, other FG ventures (cows, beekeeping, horticulture). TABU is working on reaching out to
- ❖ Agriculture as a Business (intermediate technologies, village processing plants, sustainable ag and diversity, high-value crops, crop storage...)
- ❖ Entrepreneurship & Business / IGA (Income Generating Activities) Development

Number Of People Assisted

Through formal training: 266

Through direct technical assistance (Do not double count): 0

Out of these above, number of host staffs: N/A

Training/assistance by field

Category	Women	Men	TOTAL
Members	174	78	252
Employees	0	0	0
SACCO Members	13	0	13
Govt. Official (Commercial officer)	0	1	1
TOTALS	187	79	266

Gender

- a) What gender roles did you recognize in your host community? Did these roles play a part in your assignment? How? *As in many cultures, women and men work together on family fields (cash crops and food crops), while women and children work on women's fields (food crops, horticulture, some cash crops). Women and men can work together on jointly held (through the FGs) fields of cash crops. Women have less time for meetings than men due to their household and child-rearing activities, and sometimes, women will defer to men in the meetings (speaking up or with activities). As a trainer it was necessary to facilitate the inclusion of women to give them room to speak and act.*
- b) How might CRS or the host organization improve opportunities for the women in this host or host community? *For Volunteers who are not as familiar with gender roles in Uganda (and in the various ethnic groups), providing them with this information prior to arrival or during the introduction time at the CRS/FtF office. Encouraging them to create training materials related to gender-equity and providing them with facilitation tips on how to manage the gender issue, including separate training sessions for women*

Value Of Volunteer's Contribution: \$ 662.5

- a. Hours volunteer spent preparing for assignment prior to departure: 10 hours
- b. Estimated value of all material contributions volunteer contributed to host during assignment: \$US75.00

Value of Hosts' Contribution

	<u>USD</u>
Meals (Refreshments)	45.32
Transportation	0
Lodging	0
Translation (Oral & Written)	169.96
Others	
(Renting chairs)	38.24
Air time (mobilization)	7.08
First aid for one participant	7.08
TOTALS	266.98

Host Profile Data

Did you obtain any data that supplements or corrects the data in the existing host information as detailed in the SOW? Please list it. *(See above, opening paragraph)*

Recommendations to CRS

- 1) Reduce the amount of preliminary paperwork required by the Volunteer as much of it is duplicate one form can be used to cover the information required for everyone (extra info never hurts).



- 2) Ensure that a complete SWOT has been conducted by the Project Coordinators and the Hosts prior to their arrival, and that any modifications to or creation of new SWOTs are provided by the Volunteer. And of course, these should also be developed/shared with the Hosts.

- 3) Consider providing/coordinating long-distance follow-up training when appropriate between Hosts & Volunteers. Specifically, given the nature of this type of training activity (savings and credit), the ability of people to change their minds and begin to implement something new takes time and follow-up in the field. I would like to propose that a follow-up training be conducted by me (Volunteer) to two members of each FG via skype to (1) review the concepts learned; (2) discuss implementation challenges/opportunities; and (3) present the transformation manual and explain how to use the included tools in order to make the transformation, and to have a physical record of these changes (accountability and transparency). Financially, costs could be shared by the FGs (they would pay for group transportation to the training venue), FtF (the program would pay for photocopies, an overnight for the Program Coordinator during their regular trip to the area, internet time and space renta), and the Volunteer (time, assisting with copies and space rental (if necessary), paying for “refreshments”).

Recommendations to Stakeholders

- ❖ **CRS/Farmer-to-Farmer** provide follow-up to this training in a couple of months via Skype with Juliana and members of the Farmers' Groups
- ❖ **Dept. of Commercialization (Cooperatives)** could provide on-going support to the Farmers' Groups in developing their farm businesses
- ❖ **SACCO and Banks** could provide follow-up training to the Farmers' Groups on long-term savings management, management of the loan fund, sound lending practices (5 C's), etc.
- ❖ **Feed the Future / UNDP / Others** could continue to provide training on any of the afore-mentioned subjects and invite TABU and its member Farmers' Groups