The 4th National Intergenerational Literacy Learners’ Conferences in Uganda

On the theme

ICT Literacies for Community Mobilization and Sustainable Local Economic Development in Uganda

Jointly organized by

Uganda Rural Literacy and Community Development Association (URLCODA)
Makerere University Centre for Lifelong Learning
Uganda Community Libraries Association (UgCLA)
Maendeleo Foundation
Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO)
St. Joseph’s College, Ombaci

At St. Joseph’s College, Ombaci in Arua District from April 25 – 28, 2014

A Concept note for enhancing a multi-stakeholder framework for promoting intergenerational, lifelong and life-wide learning opportunities for all in Uganda and beyond

March 2014
**Introduction**

The need for a healthy, functional and productive population in any country cannot be overemphasized. Good health of a given population relates closely to issues of food security, equitable access to literacy, education, health care, other social services and enabling political environment. However, there are serious challenges at both global and local levels that hamper global efforts to have a healthy and productive population. These include the ongoing changes in our climate reflected in terms of drought, floods, hunger, poverty, illiteracy and violent armed conflicts. A poor, hungry and illiterate population experiences diminished skills required for optimal levels of production in the economy, and more so in agricultural sector thereby causing food shortages, hunger, famine and malnutrition across the world.

In addition, our world is rapidly globalizing with tremendous changes in every sector of the current knowledge based economy. Although this is being praised on the one hand, it is being criticized for marginalizing the majority poor in developing countries on the other. With large number of the world’s population still being non-literate in different contexts, a concerted efforts in the form of global and local partnerships is needed to promote flexible, informal, non-formal and formal learning opportunities for all as a lifelong process.

Lifelong learning refers to a process through which individuals acquire knowledge, skills and values in a range of formal and informal settings throughout their lifespan. It provides formal education, vocational training, and personal development. It enables informed citizens to make positive and rewarding contributions to sustain their environment, their community and the economy. Its importance is further seen in a statement by (Toffler, n.d.) in which he said: ‘the illiterate of the 21st century will not [only] be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn and relearn’ [concepts, techniques, skills, methods and strategies essential for survival in the currently globalizing economies driven by the emerging Information and Communication Technologies, ICTs]. It is on this basis that the intergenerational, cross cultural and lifelong learning initiative spearheaded by URLCODA and its partners namely: Makerere University Centre for Lifelong Learning, VEDCO, Maendeleo Foundation, and UgCLA with support from some international agencies like SIL and the Cultural Affairs Section of the US Embassy in Uganda briefly described below needed to be supported and scaled up.

**Background to the Intergenerational, cross cultural and lifelong learners Conferences in Uganda**

The 4th National Intergenerational Literacy Learners’ conferences in Uganda follows a series of three others that successfully took place in different districts. It was resolved in the first conference that the event be rotated throughout the country as described below.


- The 2nd conference on: ‘Illiteracy, poverty, environmental degradation, food insecurity and culture: Challenges for local adaptation to climate changes in Uganda’ took place in Namasagali College, Kamuli District from January 18 – 22, 2010 (see U.S. Mission Supports Environmental Literacy in Rural Uganda [http://kampala.usembassy.gov/pr_01222010.html](http://kampala.usembassy.gov/pr_01222010.html)); and


In all the three cases, the events aimed to enable the ordinary and poor local communities to interact directly and freely with the academia, researchers, development practitioners and political leaders in discussing issues that directly affect their livelihoods with a view to enhancing non-formal and lifelong learning. Organized based on the principles of collaboration, partnerships, resource sharing, inclusiveness and volunteerism, a lot of emphasis is placed on informality, inter-culturalism and multilingualism to enable all the unschooled have a say in the discussion during the conference. In line with the values/principles of indigenous non-formal learning, the event accommodates all age groups. The range of activities undertaken normally include one day community health/medical camps for the hosting community as a pre-conference activity, computer training that runs throughout the conference days, plenary sessions with key note speakers, question and answer sessions, group discussions, a variety of cultural shows, exhibition of local crafts from different regions, and closing ceremonies as shown in Appendix 1. Mobilization of the participants and resources for the conference is done voluntarily by the partners.
The organization and Funding of the conferences
These conferences do not have funding and the organizing partners normally approach those organizations with some additional resources to give in a helping hand to extend basic social services to those difficult to reach sections of Uganda population beyond URLCODA’s initiative. URLCODA’s activities are driven by the concept of virtual voluntarism with no paid employees. It believes there are some redundant resources in other organizations that volunteers can be made to put to effective use to extend service, hence its reliance on voluntarism and partnership with other resourceful organizations to reach the less privileged sections of the Ugandan population.

It is important to note that these are not luxurious conferences where participants can receive lavish allowances. They are normally requested to come with the idea of basically seeking to meet their learning, information and knowledge and skills needs essential for improving their livelihoods. As a result, St. Joseph’s College will offer class rooms as venue for the conferences, rooms for sleeping in students’ dormitories and other facilities to ensure the success of the event. Organizers will ensure that every participant in the conference has enough to eat in the form of breakfast, mid-morning tea, lunch, evening tea and dinner. So the participants are requested to come with portable beddings. Organizers will also work hard to ensure security of the participants and maintain some medical workers to meet emergency medical/health needs during the conference.

Some Achievements from the past conferences and Challenges
The organization of the past three conferences have registered both achievements and faced some formidable challenges. Among some of the achievements the conferences have:
- involved over 2000 individuals and 50 government/non-governmental and international agencies in addressing issues that relate to social protection, enhancing resilience of local groups and individuals, equipping people with necessary informations, skills and knowledge for surviving in this competitive environment (See appendix 3)
- Demonstrated that pooling resources together can enhance access to basic social services by the disadvantaged people and alleviate some of their problems
- made it possible for government officials and political leaders to communicate policies directly to the people and enabled local people receive direct answers to queries regarding certain policy issues
- enabled over 1000 participants to acquire computer skills and enhance their opportunities for accessing information through the use ICT skills on various issues of interest to them
- offered ground for University students to practically engage with communities thereby helping them to translate theoretical knowledge to practice and support the poor in service delivery
- enabled Makerere University to reach directly to the communities and respond to their needs

However, these achievements were not without challenges. These include: insufficient time to mobilize the communities and coordinate with partners, lack of financial and other materials resources needed to undertake the activities, poor attitudes towards the concept of voluntarism, transport constraints and linguistic barriers. Barriers to sustained participation include time pressure and competing interests. This is why it is necessary for the volunteer organizers to reach out those organizations which have some additional resources to help them reach some of the vulnerable groups in remote villages.

The 4th Conference
The forthcoming conference under the theme: ICT Literacies for Community Mobilization and Sustainable Local Economic Development in Uganda aims to draw over 400 participants from different regions of Uganda to gather at St. Josph’s College Ombaci from April 25 – 28, 2014. ICTs are increasingly becoming necessary for a productive and rewarding life, and are changing the ways we learn. Virtual communities, online training and education, and informal and non-formal access to a wealth of learning resources are available through ICTs. All the local stakeholders emphasize that the Internet is
ICTs are now key skills along with numeracy, reading and writing. The huge cost of ICTs in schools for hardware, software, connectivity, support and training means that investment for the future must be strategic, coherent, flexible, adaptive and affordable. Sharing of resources and collaboration between schools and local communities have been identified as potential strategies to ensure all students gain the basic skills and new learning opportunities provided by ICTs. There is an increasing need for the provision of informal and non-formal training related to specific learning needs with bias to ICTs that do not require a certificate. The challenge for the learning sector is to provide affordable ‘just in time’ training for local people as required. This is why URLCODA and its partners would request all those resourceful organizations to give in a helping hand to support this intergenerational, cross cultural and non-formal lifelong learning initiative. The purpose of this 4th conference is therefore to provide an excellent opportunity for participants to learn about the role of ICTs in improving indigenous knowledge systems, beliefs, technologies, skills and attitudes so as to contribute towards achieving some of the Millennium Development Goals such as hunger, famine, poverty, gender equality in education, illiteracy etc.

The 4th conference promises to offer a variety of activities deliberately focused on ICTs such as: literacy learners’ testimonies, exhibition of learners’ products; keynote speeches from persons in position of authority, groups discussions after the key note speeches, reading and writing competitions among learners; listening to stories from elderly participants while sitting by evening fire places; football matches by male and female learners from different regions as highlighted in Appendix 1. The volunteer organizers will make every effort to ensure that there are enough competent translators to make everybody get the messages being passed across in the face of the linguistic diversity that will characterize the conference. For written speeches, they will be translated in advance and conferees will have copies in various languages of their choice.

**Why Support the 4th Intergenerational, Cross Cultural and Lifelong Learning Conference**

- It is important to support the 4th conference because it helps to create exchange of information, knowledge and skills among the participants. Informed citizens are an essential foundation for democracy. Citizens need an understanding of local issues so as to get involved in decision-making. This event provides opportunities for communities to learn about issues through community forums, public exhibition of plans, public meetings, environmental awareness workshops, and consultation workshops. In short, lifelong learning develops opportunities for “high quality jobs and successful careers, full and creative lives, prosperity, and strong and resourceful communities” (UNESCO, 2009).
- It will acts as a ground for mobilization of local communities to receive skills, knowledge and attitudes about ICTs and how they can be used to access non-formal agricultural education on natural disasters, famine, hunger, food security, strategies for post-harvest loss reduction, nutrition, agribusiness, and markets for agricultural produce and inputs. As pointed out in the second conference report, some subsistence farmers in other regions have been educated on some of these issues by organizations like the World Food Programme, UNDP and VEDCO while farmers coming from some of the regions do not have access to such non-formal agricultural education. This event offers an excellent opportunity for them to informally and non-formally share such experiences, information and knowledge.
- Your support for the 4th conference will assist the pool of medical volunteers in collaboration with nearest Health facility to enable thousands of people in the host community access free medical services including HIV/AIDS counselling and testing, diagnosis, treatment of various ailments and referrals to appropriate health facility.
- As has been in the history of the conferences, the event will provide an avenue for free and non-formal interaction between academics, policy makers and implementers as well as development practitioners to share experiences, information and knowledge regarding development challenges, government policies and research findings that are relevant to the communities.
- It will also provide opportunity for acquiring ICTs skills on various issues ranging from health, literacy learning, agricultural production, communication, marketing and work related to savings and credit cooperative societies in the communities.
It will expose university students to primary school pupils and secondary school students through the academic seminars and career guidance they will offer to them and thereby enabling the University students applying theoretical knowledge in service delivery.

**Outputs from the lifelong learners’ conference**

It is expected that by the end of the conference, at least:

- 400 participants will be equipped with skills, information and knowledge on agricultural production, and access to information on markets for agricultural produce, inputs and food security
- 200 – 300 host communities provided with free health services like HIV/AIDS counseling, testing and referrals, clinical diagnosis, treatment and health education
- All the participants will be able to share cultural experiences on various issues through story telling at fire places, traditional music, and dances targeting issues related to change in attitudes and behaviors for better living
- 100 secondary school students from 10 secondary schools in Arua and Masindi districts involved in the conference through academic seminars, career guidance computer and other ICT skills training by Makerere University students and some resourceful members from Ombaci Old boys Association
- 60 Makerere University students engaged in applying theories they have learnt from class to real world situation through computer training, organizing activities of the conference such as translation services
- At least 400 people across geographical location, culture and educational background made to interact freely for purposes of non-formal and intergenerational learning
- A number of development organizations able to pass on some messages about agriculture, food security, livelihoods, health, education etc directly to the ordinary people; and
- A network meeting of partners held to come up with the way forward for supporting non-formal, intergenerational and lifelong interventions in Uganda

**Appeal for support**

We the volunteer organizers would like to appeal individuals, local and international development organizations as well as faith based organization to extend a helping in supporting this rare event for the disadvantaged people. You can join hands with the volunteer organizers through: (1) Sponsoring some participants; (2) donating some funds or material resources to support some of the activities; (3) physically coming to be part of the three-day deliberations; (4) referring an interested person; and (4) linking URLCODA and its partners in this endeavour to prospective funding bodies that can offer any form of assistance for the success of the conference.

NB: Donations and Sponsorships can be made through URLCODA’s Bank Account whose details are as follows:

- **A/C Name:** Uganda Rural Literacy and Community Development Association
- **A/C No.:** 2020436564
- **Bank:** Centenary Bank
- **Branch:** Arua
- **A/C Type:** Savings

Any form of assistance rendered towards this noble cause shall be duly acknowledged and thoroughly accounted for after the completion of project. We will share the report of the conference through appropriate means as part of the accountability process.

For more information about this conference, you are welcome to consult with the following persons:

1. Dr. Willy Ngaka, Conference Convener, Tel (256) 772 411304, E-mail: wngaka@gmail.com
2. Dr. Rogers Ayiko, Chairman, URLCODA/Co-convener, E-mail: ayikor@yahoo.com
   Tel. (255) 786 030074
3. Ms Jane Nakiranda, Eastern Regional Manager VEDCO, Tel. (256) 779 101566
4. Ms Asia Kamukama, ED – Maendeleo Foundation Tel. (256) 775 987250, E-mail: asaviille2@gmail.com, asia@maendeleofoundation.org
5. Ms Brenda Musoke Musasizi, National Coordinator, UgCLA, Tel. (256) 773 199627, E-mail: musokebren@gmail.com, brenmusoke@yahoo.com
6. Mr. Alex Erejo, Lecturer, Hospice Africa Uganda, Tel. (256) 701 277 442, E-mail: aerejo@hotmail.com
Appendices

Appendix 1: Tentative Summary of 4th Conference Activities

Day One – April 25, 2014: Community Health/Medical Camp & Reporting of Participants
Health/medical camp will involve:
- Registration of patients/clients
- Key Note remarks on: The role of voluntarism in enhancing access to healthcare services by the rural poor and official opening of the medical camp – by Chief of Party – URC/USAID Sustain Project
- HIV counselling testing and referrals to appropriate HIV/AIDS facility
- Screening of NCDs such as body mass index, blood pressure, diabetes (sugar levels), cancer etc.
- Treatment of diseases found and referrals of complicated cases
- Immunization of children
- Health education/sensitization on various health issues

Day Two – April 26, 2014: ICTs for transformation of rural livelihoods
- Brief Key Note Remarks on ICTs, entrepreneurship/small scale businesses and rural livelihoods by:
  - HE Richard Angualia – The Ugandan Ambassador in Cairo, Egypt
- Official Opening – by The Deputy Rep, UN – Uganda Mr Adam Yao
- Parallel sessions for Various Groups on:
  - Rural savings and investment schemes: challenges and the future prospects – by David Madira, MD
  - ICTs, rural youth and management of substance abuse – Mr. Michael Walimbwa – Assistant Lecturer, Makerere University School of Education
  - ICTs for literacy learning and instructions in mother tongue- Lessons from URCODA’s dummy clay keyboard – Dr. Willy Ngaka – Coordinator Makerere University Centre for Lifelong Learning/Nelson Acadri, Arual Core PTCMs. Asia Kamukama – ED Maendeleo
  - General computer skills for beginners – Mr. William & Makerere University student instructors
- Plenary Session for Reporting by groups – various group leaders
- Resolutions based on the reports from groups – Mr. Vincent Abigaba (HR Makerere University College of Education & Hon. Kamilo Sabo (Secretary for Finance, Arua District Local Government)
- Football match between Makerere University male Students and URLCODA male members
- Story telling by fire places from elders of different regions/cultures
- Exhibition of Crafts and Agricultural Products

Day Three – April 27, 2014: ICTs, Food Security, Nutrition and Marketing
- Key note remarks on ICTs, Food production, Food security, Marketing and Post-harvest loss management by – Mr. Sam WadriNyakua – Chairman, Arua District Local Government
- Permanent Secretary, Ministry of ICT – The Country Representative, World Food Programme, Uganda
- Parallel sessions for Various Groups on:
  - ICTs and food production: methods, challenges and prospects for poverty reduction by and Mr. Iga Patrick CEO, Farming Consult & Management Company (FACOM)
  - ICTs and marketing in agricultural production: Challenges and opportunities – Mr. Okuti Richard
  - Post-harvest loss management: local contexts, challenges and the way forward – Dr. Ben Obaa
  - ICTs in agricultural interventions for youth involvement in development – Mr. Charles Draecabo UNESCO Uganda
  - Community radio demonstration using a mobile phone – By Mr. Jude Mukundane, Chief Technology Officer, Rootio.org
  - Computer/ICT training and Skype Presentation on Career guidance by Fr. Ruffino Ezama in Ohio, and Mr. Godfrey Mundua, Chairman Ombaci OBs Association
  - Mother tongue
- Plenary Session for Reporting by groups – various group leaders
- Resolutions based on the reports from groups – Oscar Mugula (Assistant Lecturer, School of Distance and Lifelong Learning, Makerere University & Mr. Charles Acema, DEO Arua District)
- Football match between Makerere University female Students and URLCODA women Mr. Jasindo Afebua
- Cultural/traditional music, drama and dances
- Exhibition of crafts and agricultural products
- Short Prayer Service in the evening by Rt. Rev. Dr. Joel Obetia, Bishop of Madi and West Nile Diocese

Day Four – April 28, 2014 – Official Closing Ceremony
- Awards to different groups
- Closing remarks
- Partners networking meeting – Dr. Willy Ngaka and Mr. Richard Okuti
- Official Closure by Hon. Rukia Nakadama, State Minister for Gender and Culture, MoGLSD
- Exhibition of Crafts and Agricultural Products
Appendix 2: List of Districts that have been represented in the past conferences

1. Adjuman
2. Amuria
3. Arua
4. Bududa
5. Bugiri
6. Bulisa
7. Butaleja
8. Hoima
9. Iganga
10. Jinja
11. Kabale
12. Kalangala
13. Kampala
14. Kamuli
15. Kibaale
16. Kiryadongo
17. Koboko
18. Luwero
19. Maracha
20. Masaka
21. Masindi
22. Mbale
23. Mbarara
24. Mpiji
25. Mukono
26. Nakasongola
27. Nebbi
28. Sironko
29. Tororo
30. Wakiso
31. Yumbe
32. Zombo
Appendix 3: List of Agencies that have supported the conferences in the past

1. Adult Literacy and Basic Education Centre (ALBEC)
2. AIDS Information Centre, Arua Branch
3. Arua Diocese Health Department
4. Arua District Local Government
5. Arua Nurses & Midwifery Training School
6. Arua Public Secondary School
7. Arua Regional Referral Hospital
8. Ediofe Girls Secondary School
9. Education Standards Agency (ESA)
10. Esta Industries
11. GaaGaa Enterprises Ltd
12. Here Is Life/Voice of Life
13. Highland Mineral Water Ltd
15. Kamuli District Local Government
16. Kamuli Hospital
17. Kings FM Station Masindi
18. Kinyara Sugar Works
19. KK Travelers Ltd
20. Kuluva Hospital
21. Literacy and Adult Basic Education (LABE) Arua Branch
22. Madi and West Nile Diocese
23. Maendeleo Foundation
24. Makerere University
25. Maracha Hospital
26. Masindi District Local Government
27. Masindi District NGO Forum
28. Masindi –KitaraDioces
29. Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD)
30. Muni Girls Secondary School
31. Mvara Secondary School
32. Namasagali College
33. National Community of Women Living with AIDS (NACWOLA), Arua Branch
34. National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)
35. Recreation for Peace and Development (RDP)
36. Ropan International Ltd
37. Rotary Club Masindi District Branch
38. Rubaga Mission Hospital in Kamuli
39. Rwenzori Water
40. St. Joseph’s College, Ombaci
41. Star-EC
42. The AIDS Support Organization (TASO), Masindi Branch
43. The Public Affairs Office of the US Embassy in Uganda (see web page)
44. Uganda Adult Education Network (UGAADEN)
45. Uganda Cares
46. Uganda Literacy and Adult Learners Association (ULALA)
47. Uganda Red Cross Society
48. Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA)
49. UPDF – Masindi Barracks
50. Volunteer Efforts for Development Concerns (VEDCO)
Appendix 4: Prominent personalities associated with the idea

Dorothy Ngalompi, Cultural affairs specialist – US Embassy in Uganda
Dr. Atiku Isaac – Arua Hospital
Dr. Awiyo – Mulago Hospital
Dr. Dan Babikwa – NEMA
Dr. Charles Owenza – Makerere University (RIP)
Dr. Christine Glanz – UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (international advisor)
Dr. Fahdil Geriga – Kuru Hospital
Dr. George Opeuru – Makerere University/Chair Uganda Adult Education Network
Dr. Goretie Nabanoga – the then Dean, Faculty of Forestry and Nature Conservation, Makerere University
Dr. Pario Hillary – Kuluva Hospital
Dr. Peter Maurice Siminyu
Dr. Pontius Apanu – Ayivu Health Subdistrict
Dr. Rogers Ayiko – Programme officer – Eastern, Central and Southern African Health Community, Arusha
Dr. Willy Ngaka – Makerere University
Hon Rukia Nakadama, State Minister of GLSD
Hon Steven Malinga – Minister of Health
Hon. Kamilo Sabo – Vice Chairman Arua District Local Government
Mr. Albert Mooli – President Rotary Club Masindi District
Mr. Alex Erejo – Hospice Uganda
Mr. Christopher Yiki, Director, Uganda Christian University, Arua Branch
Mr. Emmanuel Kasule – VEDCO
Mr. Philemon Mukisa – Makerere University
Mr. Habai Everest – Uganda Red Cross Society
Mr. Ismail Kasita – Director ULALA
Mr. John Dune – former Deputy Public Affairs Officer, US Embassy in Uganda
Mr. John, H. Dunes, Former Deputy Public Affairs Officer in US Embassy in Uganda
Mr. Jonathan Mulawa, Headteacher Namasagali College
Mr. Moses Mukwaya, Former Head teacher Kabalega Secondary School
Mr. Richard Dranda – Executive Director, ALBEC
Mr. Sabo Benard – LC I Chairman Kirasa village, Masindi
Mr. Tito Okum E-learning Manager, Makerere University
Mr. Tinka Zarugaba – OC CID Masindi Police
Mrs Grace Tebakanya – Field Supervisor Kinyara Sugar Works
Mrs Margaret Ekwang, DEO Masindi District
Ms Annet, Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA)
Ms Florence Ajuru – Head teacher Santa Lucia Basic School
Ms Lisa Heilbronn – Former Public Affairs Officer in US Embassy in Uganda
Prof. Alan Rogers – University of East Anglia (international advisor)
Prof. Bonny Norton – University of British Columbia (international advisor)
Prof. Brian Street – Kings College London (international advisor)
Prof. Kate Parry – Chairperson UgCLA & City University of New York
Rev Canon Edwin (Madi and West Nile Diocese)
Rev. Canon Ram Bunia (Madi and West Nile Diocese)
Rev. Samuel Kwesiga, Masindi-Kitara Diocese
Rt. Rev. Dr. Joel Obetia, Bishop of Madi and West Nile Diocese.