

GLOBALIZATION AND THE ROLE OF NGOS IN POVERTY ERADICATION: FOCUS ON WOMEN'S FEDERATION FOR PEACE IN UGANDA

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1. Introduction and background

1.1 Introduction:

Poverty can be defined as the inability to achieve and enjoy, on a sustainable basis, the basic necessities of life. In Uganda, like many countries in Africa, these necessities include;

- Clean and safe drinking water
- Sufficient nutritious food
- Energy for cooking food and lighting
- Good shelter
- Adequate clothing and beddings
- School fees etc.

Even simple things taken for granted elsewhere, such as, sugar, salt and matches are not easily available to almost 35 % of the families of Uganda. In spite of the abundant natural resources such as fertile land, abundant surface of water and a climate quite suitable for agriculture, many families in Uganda still live in poverty.

According to the most recent World Bank survey, about 35% of the 24 million Ugandans live on less than 1 US \$ a day and are below the poverty line. This is however, a remarkable drop from 51 % about 10 years ago.

One of the major causes of this persistent poverty is

LACK OF SUFFICIENT KNOWLEDGE AND PRACTICAL SKILLS ON HOW TO USE THE AVAILABLE RESOURCES PROFITABLY AND SUSTAIN THEM.

Since 1994, WFPU has been actively involved in assisting many Ugandan families to attain and lead more sustainable livelihoods using the resources available to them. Through a combination of dedicated selfless service by WFPU members, the financial and technical support of WFWPI volunteers from Japan who have been physically and heartistically attached to Uganda since 1994, and selective partnerships with NGOS with proven practical development models, WFPU has managed to touch the hearts of many families and bring joy and hope to them. I would like to share WFPU's humble contribution to the Uganda Government's, drive against poverty eradication in this presentation:

1.2 Background.

WFPU, a local chapter of WFWPI was first established in Uganda early 1992. In January 1993 I was appointed as the President of the 10 month old WFPU. In mid 1994, WFPU was boosted by the coming of 10 WFWPI volunteers from Japan. Their joining our local team was such a big blessing. For over three years, we worked tirelessly, many times beyond midnight, slept in remote villages, danced with the community members, ate local food and laughed and cried with many deprived mothers, orphans and widows. As a result Uganda now boasts of active WFPU chapters in 32 of the country's, 56 districts. We would like to reach all districts and hope with more support from people of good will, we will be able to achieve this goal.

2. WFPU Areas of Operation.

Since 1992, WFPU has been concentrating on the following areas:

2.1 Women Emancipation

Believing that mothers are the pillars of the family and hence a stable community, WFPU has been educating and equipping women especially, mothers and the girl-child in life skills, developmental planning, cash crop growing and management, business development etc.. Over 130 short seminars and training sessions have been held at national, district and grassroots levels in the last 10 years.

2.1 HIV/AIDS education and Counseling

Targeting schools, families and out of school youths, a total of 287 such seminars have been held.

2.3 Family values, and sisterhood.

Meetings, discussion groups, counseling and film shows are held regularly for school teachers, couples, families and single parents to improve on parent-child communication and communication between couples. Mothers are bonded through sisterhood ceremonies on national and village levels. As sisters they support each other in economic activities and other problems.

2.4 Education:

WFPU believes that knowledge and practical skills are the key to sustainable development, and we have since 1996, been involved in assisting many young people with no hope of ever getting any education to have access to good quality education. The following projects were started with the support of WFPU and WFWP Japan to assist poverty stricken families and orphans.

Kizinda Parents Vocational High School:

Alongside its formal secondary school education, KPVHS now helps over 450 students to acquire carpentry, sewing, agricultural, building and construction, and environmental management skills.

Katwe Parents Nursery and Primary School.

This now has about 300 pupils from kindergarten to primary three. 70- are orphans, the rest are from very poor families.

Trinity Preparatory School Bunaruguru Parents Nursery and Primary School).

210 pupils from Kindergarten to P.6 attend this school, 80 are orphans, the rest from poor families.

Peace High School

Now started to assist the following categories of the disadvantaged girl child:

- Those running away from Female Genital Circumcision in Kapchorwa and Nakapiripirit Districts.
- Girls orphaned by the HIV/AIDS pandemic.
- Returned child soldiers or those traumatized or orphaned by the war in northern Uganda.
- Very clever girls from extremely poor families who were seated at home with no school fees. We put them

back in school and give them a second chance.

WFPU has also sponsored extremely gifted students to obtain good education as Silian Turyatamba, who is finishing his Degree in Computer Science funded by WFWP Japan. He was raised by his mother alone and is a very active village youth leader. He will be the first computer scientist in the sub-county. We have sponsored teachers, nurses, and community councilors in the relevant courses. A total of 14 students in this category have been sponsored.

Since 1995, WFPU realized that the biggest challenges facing women and families at grassroots level was leading a deprived, poor quality of life. The following activities were put in place to help our members build an increasingly better quality of life:

- **Foods Security and nutrition:**

We introduced education in raising nutrition vegetable gardens and distributing vegetable seeds, improved cassava (tapioca and maize) and planting materials like hoes and pangas.

- **Energy Conservation:**

We distributed eucalyptus and acacia seeds for woodlots, to 130 families who established tree nurseries and are enjoying free firewood from their woodlots.

They also build Lorena energy saving stoves which save 3/5 of the wood used in cooking.

- **'Zero grazing'**

We also gave out 15 cows for indoor grazing commonly known as zero grazing in Uganda to mostly widows for income from milk and nutrition. These cows have now produced and can be passed on to 25 other families. 40 women are now able to pay fees and support their families from this intervention.

- **Income generating:**

We also raised over 2 million Arabica Coffee seedlings on the WFPU, 400-acre land and have been distributing coffee seedlings to families in Mbale district. Coffee is still one of Uganda's major cash crop. Over 1000 families have benefited from this project.

3. WFPU Partnership with UNDP in Poverty Eradication.

Encouraged by its success, especially in Mbale District in Eastern Uganda, and Bushenyi district in Western Uganda, WFPU entered into a partnership with the Integrated Family Development Initiatives (IFDI) to develop project proposals based on their Integrated Family Development Approach (IFDA).

The proposal of US\$ 50,000, which was presented, to UNDP/GET small Grants was approved and is being implemented in Bufumbo Sub-county of Mbale District. This is to help 400 families ousted by government out of Mt. Elgon forest reserve and are now living in poor conditions, on very steep degraded land prone to gully erosion and landslides.

The project aims at improving household incomes of the 400 participating families from about \$200 per year to about US \$ 1200, by using the following modern intensive intercropping of perennial and seasonal crops and agro forestry methods on one acre of family land.

- 430 coffee trees planted at 10 feet apart.
- 100 banana trees for food security but also shade for the coffee
- Beans /groundnuts for sauce but also for nitrogen fixing
- Calliandra trees for nitrogen fixing, feeder for animals, flowers for bees and ideal for firewood

- Greavellia Robusta trees for boundary planting fence and firewood
- Grass for animals on soil and water conservation trenches
- Beehives to have bees for pollination and to have honey for sale and eating
- Pineapples also on the trenches to hold the soil and to eat or sell when fruiting
- Grafted fruit trees, especially avocados and oranges.
- In addition the families are being helped to start backyard vegetable gardens in their compound and to build the Lorena wood saving stoves.

Other skills taught in the project include soil and water management, compost making, water harvesting, health and hygiene, family values and ways to avoid HIV/AIDS.

4. Impact

As can be seen from the photographs, the project is having real transformation on the people's livelihoods. There is increased income, food and energy security, and built capacity, for families to plan their continuous development.

Bufumbo sub-county has been declared by the Uganda Coffee Development Authority as a "Coffee Village", for the Arabica Coffee, and the Authority has guaranteed to purchase all the coffee for export in the next year when the harvest is due. The district leaders are very happy with the work of WFPU in Mbale district.

5. Way Forward.

WFPU has concretized a development framework that transforms very poor families to families with hope and visible developmental focus. The vision of WFPU is to have more families trained every year and got out of their vicious cycle of poverty.

Partners and support are required in areas of funding the following:

- a) Transport facilitation to reach more families.
- b) Purchasing and distribution of improved seeds and planting materials.
- c) Production and distribution of educational materials such as instructional charts, pamphlets, teaching videos, posters etc..
- d) Market strategies for the products
- e) Training in packaging, crop post harvest handling
- f) Technical assistance in form of volunteers with expertise in e.g. agriculture, bee husbandry etc.

On behalf of my country, I want to thank WFWPI for making it possible to change the lives of so many families.

I thank UNDP for supporting WFPU in this noble cause of poverty eradication.

I also thank the organizers of this conference for making it possible for me to talk about our activities. May God Bless you all

Thank you very much.