



**REFLECTING ON THE ROLE COMMUNITY
GIVING CAN PLAY IN TRANSFORMING
PEOPLE'S WELLBEING AND
DEVELOPMENT IN RESOURCE STRAINED
COMMUNITIES.**

2020



TLC UGANDA

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION:	3
PROVERBS:	7
1. Abaagire taburwa banywani / banyabuzale.	7
2. Aine ebyokulya tahoibwaho bantu.	7
3. Akaanna kagezi kabegera omukuru ekyenju.	9
4. Akaibo kagya nju eri , kagya kwendayo akandi.	9
5. Akarungi okalya na ndikatebya.	9
6. Muchwezi njuna nagawe otaireho.	9
IN THE MIDDLE OF DIFFICULTY LIED OPPORTUNITY	19
CONFERENCE CALL	20
THE TUTEMU ENGARO INITIATIVE	22
WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS FOR COMMUNITY GIVING	24

INTRODUCTION:

Community development is a process where people come together to take action on what is important to them. At its heart, community development is rooted in the belief that all people should have access to health, wellbeing, wealth, justice and opportunity.

It recognises that some people, some groups and some communities are excluded and oppressed by the way society and structures are organised. Community development seeks to challenge this and ensure fairness for all citizens.

Community development is fundamentally based on the values of human rights, social justice, equality and respect for diversity.

The principles which underpin its practice are: supports communities, of place and identity, to use their own assets to improve the quality of community life.



Traditionally, local communities within the ancient Bunyoro Kitara Kingdom that stretched from West Nile through the entire western part of Uganda up to Rwanda, Burundi and some parts of Tanzania relied on communal efforts entrenched in the values of the common good to address community problems. This culture, shaped the way communities looked at problems and the approaches these problems were addressed. Giving was an important way of their lives.

Giving is an intrinsic part of the sharing ethos of Indigenous people; sharing has always been a necessary aspect of survival.

Safe guarding community social wellbeing through public service delivery was swiftly integrated in the process of life to the extent that life itself was an expression of shared responsibility for the common good/wellbeing of every member of community. Community integrated the tradition of self-reliance and community support/ social safety networks in to oral / informal education systems like folklore and story telling classes, proverbs. All these practices were intended to express and demonstrate the need for communal self-help efforts in promoting social wellbeing for every individual in society.

A shared responsibility in the context that every able-bodied adult member of the community had a role to play to guarantee social wellbeing of other members of communities.

Central to those interventions was resources and source of these materials. Community was structured in a way that allowed equitable contributions and it was inherently molded to enable the well off to consider the wellbeing on the have nots.

Those practices outlived the pre colonial period and the challenges associated with delivering services in so-called 'fragile states' or 'difficult environments'.

This period broadly refers to a range of situations where the state was either weak or collapsed, including post-conflict settings.

But today's efficiency in Government service delivery and the emergency of rapid growing technology and heavily financed external support has distorted the good community led development/ community problems solving interventions.

This paper will also draw lessons on why the agenda around aid environments has shifted and gained considerable momentum over the past few years.

- * The role of informal education (folklore/story telling and proverbs) in shaping the spirit/culture of giving to promote social welfare.



Young children seated at a fire place being lectured by an elder about culture, traditions and values tht drive society cohesion

Public service delivery and in particular safe water extension services and maintenance, feeder road maintenance, community security, food safety, drought and famine rescue services were a responsibility of every able-bodied adult person. Whereas it was everyone's shared responsibility to make an intervention and to many sounding mandatory, the reality was these interventions were purely voluntary but deeply entrenched in community values. It was a moral obligation/duty for every member of society to be a guarantor of his/her neighbors' wellbeing and the community at large. A lot of informal teachings in form of story telling about life in the jungles and dire times, proverbs about giving depicting the hardships human race faced. Due to scarcity of resources and technological means to enable every member of community meet material needs and aspirations, communities realized that solutions to the hardships and challenges they faced were in collective efforts and solidarity while confronting the challenges they faced.



It was a regular practice for community members to gather and provide labor at community events like road constructions or even support fellow members during cultivation

To build a society with strong values, education of the young people with values of giving for the good of everyone in community was important. Young children were taught during informal education about the hardships like disease, famine, drought and war that killed many of their ancestors. These stories and proverbs were most times talking about the hardships and solutions people in the past faced and used respectively to survive.

To shade some light about what these lessons actually meant, below are some of the popular sayings that were used in the past and still remain relevant today.

Proverbs:

1. **Abaagire taburwa banywani / banyabuzale.**

This proverb depicts a person who has a lot of meat after slaughtering an animal while other people have nothing. It further states that this type of person has many friends because he has meat.

The meaning of this proverb implies all those with wealth are looked up to for support by those who have nothing and are in need. The proverb encourages the well off not to ignore the poor and those in need.

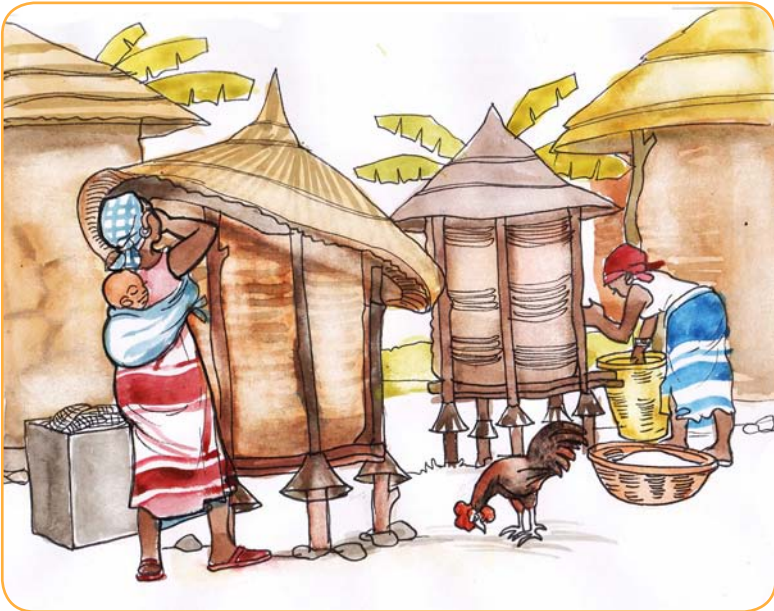
The proverb also underscores the relevance of those well off to accommodate people because they have what people need.

2. **Aine ebyokulya tahoibwaho bantu.**

Meaning of the proverb is "Anyone with food will always have people with him/her." Food being a basic need and yet land is scarce for production calls for care and support to those without means of accessing food. In the past, famine was a major problem after long

periods of drought. It was the duty of those with food to give and care for those without food. Traditionally, food donations to functions like weddings, burials, famine hit communities remains a major problem after long

periods of drought. It was the duty of those with food to give and care for those without food. Traditionally, food donations to functions like weddings, burials, famine hit communities remains a major practice. This is a gesture of care and support through giving.



This image captions a mother accessing food from a neighbor's granary. Food security for any family is a communal responsibility. It involves those having to provide for those not having

3. Akaanna kagezi kabegera omukuru ekyenju.

This proverb means “An intelligent child provides for the elder.” This proverb calls for care and support to the elders who in the logic of this proverb are old and not working. It is a form of an informal social safety net system for those who are aging.

4. Akaibo kagya nju eri , kagya kwendayo akandi.

A good turn deserves another is the meaning of this proverb. If someone does good to you, you have a duty to do good. This is a form of system where communities depend on each other for support. The proverb ideally calls for inter dependence amongst communities.

5. Akarungi okalya na ndikatebya.

The proverb calls for sharing not necessarily for gains but social capital. You share with one who will talk about the good you have done. It calls for sharing for the good of man kind and not necessarily for profit or selfish benefits.

6. Muchwezi njuna nagawe otaireho.

The proverb states that “to be helped, your efforts are necessary.” It connotes the idea of self-help. For effective support from others, your input is relevant. In other words, it tries to call for local

contributions to supplement other sources like donations towards addressing local problems.



Community work is a form of giving for the wellbeing of community

These proverbs along with many others that have not been mentioned make a foundation of systems that set social voluntary values/ norms of giving for the common good.

✳ How different is the social welfare system in developed countries and that in the “ancient Bunyoro Kitara dynasty”?

Traditionally, public service was a major role of the indigenous peoples. This was made possible through contributions. Community members provided resources in form of labor, materials and those who had money contributed money. For most of the time before colonialization, communities managed and maintained public services.

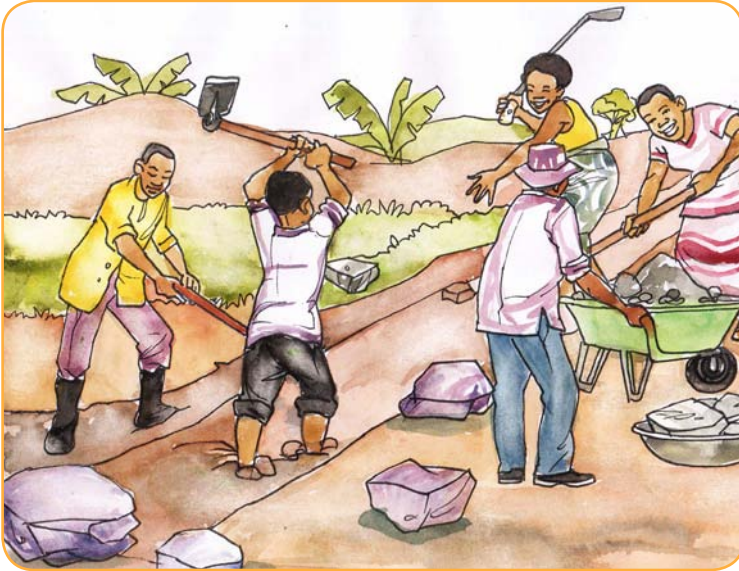
For instance, most communities dedicated at least one Saturday mornings in a month to clear water sources, dig new water wells. This was done by every village under the supervision of the village elders or local leadership. Similar to this tradition is a vivid existing tradition in neighboring Rwanda as well called the Umuganda.



During grief, bereaved families are donated items like food and money to enable them cope with the welfare challenges resulting from the passing on of their member

Umuganda is always held on the last Saturday of the month. The population in consultation with relevant authorities to carry out community work more than once a month. This work would in some cases cost a lot of money in expenses. Converting these efforts in to cash is a lot of money towards community service.

Umuganda can be translated as “coming together in common purpose to achieve an outcome,” a practice that has long existed in Rwandan culture but only recently became mandatory.



Communities labor can be an important resource for the development of their areas. Traditionally, all able-bodied people have a moral obligation to participate in activities like the one above for the good of their community

The emergency of government delivered public services greatly affected the way communities addressed their own needs. For instance, most local community roads were taken over by local governments, water extension services were taken over by the National Water and Sewerage Cooperation. Most locally source/mobilized resources to facilitate addressing community problems

were abandoned creating a dependency burden on government. This has equally had far reaching negative consequences on government delivered services. For instance, communities have referred to some government delivery programs as not theirs but Government. For example, in many communities where water extension services were provided by government, communities refer to the service as "Government's water". This implied a lack of community ownership. In many communities some of these installations were vandalized by community members.

At moments of grief or catastrophe like drought, famine, accidents and many other worse incidents that cause huge damage to a cross section of community members or a family. Whereas traditions of supporting families or community members affected by such calamities still exist, their impact has greatly reduced.

This tradition has been referred to as "Kwirukirra". "Kwirukirra (community-based 'funeral insurance services) means express support to the affected people or person to recover from the unfortunate incident. Community members pool resources in form of material things like food stuff, money, and labor to support the affected people in community. During famine, community members support those without food, in times of grief after the death of a relative, community members take responsibility of meeting burial

costs with a belief that the bereaved family could have spent a lot and need community support.



Traditional social safety nets depended on the culture, norms and values that entailed giving.

Traditional social safety nets were mainly informal entirely relying on values and norms. 'Informal social protection draws on traditional coping strategies, social capital and community-based actions' (Twigg, 2015: 187). Community-based forms of social protection are usually defined as 'an informal grouping of activities that protect community members from risk through "locally arranged social protection measures that are predicated on people's cultural beliefs, norms and value" (UNDP, 2016: 48, citing Mupedziswa & Ntseane 2013). They can include community-based funeral insurance services (Kwirukirra), village grain banks, rotating services and credit groups, [and] community-based health insurance' (UNDP, 2016: 36).

They are often self-funded. They can be effective at local level, providing an important source of security, but they may have limited outreach, as different groups will have access to different social and political networks and sources of support (Twigg, 2015: 197).

In the ancient Bunyoro Kitara social protection traditions entirely put obligations on all members of the community but most especially the well-off members of community by requiring them to support the poor members of the public through provision of welfare packages as a form of safety nets.

In the same system, safety nets revolved around structured systems like extended families', clan ties, neighborhood and village setups ties.

Education, health, and other forms of insurance systems entirely relied of the good will of the givers and the values of giving for a common good.

In the absence of administrative structures during calamities like drought, famine floods or invasions communities pulled resources to address such calamities. For instance

*** The impact of changing mandate of Government and external aid on community interventions through giving for development.**

The pre colonial period was characterized by poor service delivery, weak tax systems due to attributed to a less developed administration/existing governance systems. The kingdoms at the time (Tooro, Bunyoro and Ankole) that formed part of the ancient Bunyoro Kitaara Kingdom had limited resources to address all the necessary pressing needs of their people. Communities devised

strategies that adopted to the existing needs like public service delivery in the health and education sector, water and sanitation, infrastructure development like roads and schools to mention but a few. As already stated, the source of this support came from community resources. Community members built their own roads, water sources, improvised their own informal education structures to mention but a few using their own resources inspired by the spirit of solidarity and self-reliance to promote the common wellbeing of every member.

However, with the emergence of colonialism, service delivery was more structure from the central up to the lower levers. This however did not affect the norms, values and practices of giving immediately. Communities had more reasons to remain united for reasons beyond service delivery as the need to join forces to resist colonial rule became more of the communities pre occupation.

Communities continued to provide for their social needs and services along with their struggles against colonial rule. The anti-colonial struggles are not a major focus here but it is important to understand the role they played to disable community systems with deep rooted traditions of giving.

The post-colonial era led to further erosion of most traditional practices. The invading foreign technology and heavily financed external support have had a negative influence on majorly community self-made contributions towards addressing community problems.

With policies that made a mandatory role for governments to provide public services, rural urban migrations (majorly in search of employment, education and a better life in town) and the porous

community social structures that distorted the cohesive nature and bond/ties amongst members of communities, the spirit of self-help and community self-reliance are dying out.

One of the old eroded practices that formed the basis of social safety nets was a large extended family where the young ones provided for the elders within the family and immediate outside family friends and associates. Where as this may have many short comings that no one would like to encounter, the point here is communities had devised within their means a system to support/care for those who were unable to provide for their basic needs. One's pension was guaranteed in a system like this unlike today especially in non-welfare states and more so in poor countries old people are suffering and dying after spending the last years of their life in isolation.

The traditional spirit of self-reliance, solidarity and resilience has gradually faded leading to new mechanisms of mobilizing and safeguarding local resources to address community needs.

Revitalizing old traditions of giving through community mobilizations and organizing

TLC works with communities to address contemporary human rights problems. Some of these problems are a result of government's actions or omissions, corporate abuses among many other problems. Most of the community struggles call for consolidated community efforts by organizing mass community movements to advocate

through the media and most recently through courts to access justice.

TLC has piloted 1 project where communities affected by mass evictions from their land by the Uganda Wild Life Authority are seeking justice in courts of law.

In the mid 1990's Uganda faced the Allied Democratic Forces rebellion operating with bases in the Eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The rebels would regularly use their bases in the Democratic Republic of Congo to access Uganda through the jungles of Mountain Rwenzori and Tooro Semuliki game reserve to launch attacks on the Ugandan military bases and civilians.

Communities around the Mountain Rwenzori and Tooro Semuliki game reserve were displaced to various parts of the country and internal Displacement Camps.

When the insurgency ended around 2002, communities originally settled around the eastern stretch of the Tooro Semuliki game reserve (close to 150 kilometers) were shocked when part of their land had been fenced off as part of the national park.

For over a decade and a half, communities through their local political leadership attempted to reclaim their land but all in vain. The situation escalated in to hostilities with allegations of summary execution of community members by the wildlife rangers/guards, extortion and malicious damage on properties.

In 2017, communities petitioned TLC to offer advocacy support and amplify community voices. Following a successful assessment of the case, TLC offered to support the affected communities. A court case was filed against Uganda Wildlife Authority for unlawfully evicting communities from the land. Through court mediation was initiated. Court also granted the both parties permission to re-open boundaries. TLC with financial support from KIOS (A Finnish Human Rights Organization) funded the boundary opening exercise (Survey) in 2018. This survey report was to form the basis /evidence of the claim by the communities against the national park authorities or the national park justification for extended boundaries.

However, as it turned out the methodology of the process was wrongly done and could not provided the right results on ground.

Another survey was required yet the funds had been exhausted. Coincidentally, through discussions between TLC, Open Society Foundation and the Global Fund for Community Foundations on tapping in to the potential of local resource mobilization for development, a number of topics were discussed including the traditions of giving in the global North and how less developed is was in the South. Discussions in 2019 were focusing on how do we develop/promote/encourage debate on local giving for development, how can TLC build local constituencies that would be used as sources of enhancing its ability to tap in to the untapped potential.

It all appeared to be a whole new chapter in the way community solutions to problems can be financed.

In the middle of difficulty lied opportunity

Whilst contemplating on the dilemma to re do another survey for tens of thousands of people with no assured source of financing, all seemed doomed. Court could not proceed on speculation but facts on ground.



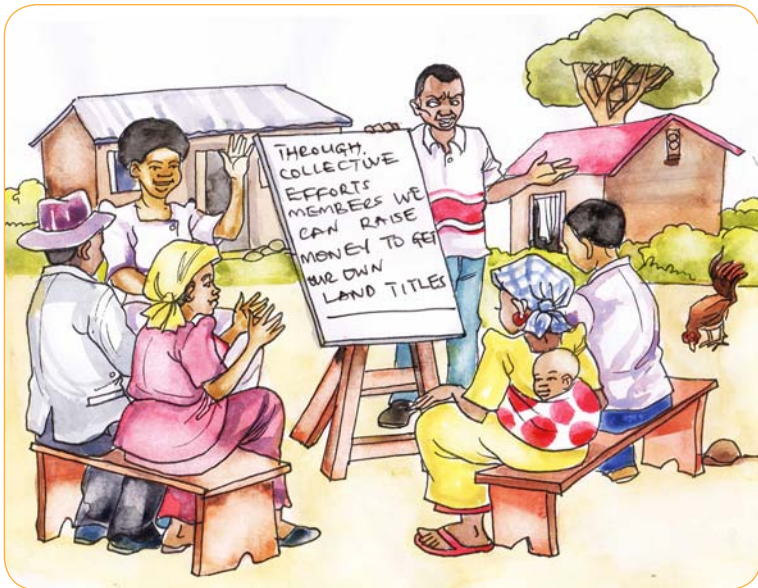
Conference call

An opening happened. Following discussions/consultations with the Global Fund for Community Foundations, Zambia Governance Foundation and the Open Society Foundations, a number of local funding models were explored. Not one but several approaches were discussed. It is from these discussions and knowledge exchanges

that we came up with a model where communities can be mobilized, organized and supported to contribute to community causes.

In August 2019, TLC piloted a self-financing model where community members were required contribute towards survey fees to open boundaries as a measure of resolving the dispute between communities and the national park. The new survey report would locate the variations between original boundaries of the park and grabbed land added to the national park land.

Communities were sensitized, taken through reflections about the past and communities addressed the problems they encountered. It was an important way for communities to also reflect back on the journey they had made since the first step into the struggle to reclaim their land.



The spirit of solidarity, tradition of self-help and the reality of losing land unlawfully inspired communities to do something about reclaiming the lost land. There was a ray of hope had communities taken the right decision.

With court deadlines to undertake surveys fast approaching, we had one month to have a report for submission to court.

In a period of 30 days, 342 people had made contributions totaling to 18,260,000 Uganda shillings equivalent to dollars 5,072 towards survey and administration court processes.

No one ever thought communities had capacity to make such contribution. The turn up was over whelming.

One key question remains hanging, is it the spirit of solidarity that inspired contributions or the fear to lose land?

All the same, the answer is resources were contributed voluntarily to pay for opening new boundaries.

The survey was successfully concluded and report ready before court for processing.

Similar projects have been implemented in a short period of time. Our sister organization, the institution that hosted TLC at its infant stages has strong roots in cultural programs, spotting talent and nurturing it for professional music, dance and drama industry. Engabu Za Tooro, a cultural organization a few years past its 20th anniversary has implemented similar community giving programs and the latest among them being the TUTEMU ENGARO initiative.

The TUTEMU ENGARO initiative

Beginning with 2010, Engabu Za Tooro, a local cultural NGO mobilized people of Tooro, Unyoro, Busongora, Kitagwenda and Butuku communities for nomination of Empako (mpaako is a naming system practiced by the Batooro, Banyoro, Batuku, Batagwenda and Banyabindi, whereby children are given one of twelve names shared across the communities in addition to their given and family names) and Kogere oral tradition (The Kogyere Oral Tradition [E Kyigano cya Kogyere] describes the reign of a great woman ruler called Kogyere I Rusija-Miryango, who was the ruler and founder of the kingdom of Busongora in the waning decades of the ancient Batembuzi [Founders] Dynasties, and specifically of the Shenzi [Zenj] Empire, about 1000 years ago) for UNESCO inscription.

This followed the urgent concern to preserve endangered traditions like empako and Kogere traditions. In 2013, UNESCO Inscribed Empako on the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding and in 2017 UNESCO approved co-funding of the Empaako heritage safeguarding project.

As a principle, the funded entity had to contribute 20% of its budget. With no alternative source of funding like revenue from investment, the need for local contributions arose.

The organization has mobilized communities and clans around traditions of giving to generate the 20% budget contribution towards safeguarding the empako tradition.

The above initiative code named TUTEMU ENGARO (Lets join hands) literally implying let us join efforts is a community self help fund which re-kindles and builds on the traditional spirit of self-reliance and solidarity to pool community resources for safe guarding its endangered intangible cultural traditions.

Many other important initiatives like the Hosea Nkojo education fund, community Gift circle funding schemes, burungi bwansi scheme.

What the future holds for community giving

A lot of learning and unlearning is on-going but with no doubt the relevance of community philanthropy taking center stage. On the first attempt of engaging community we saw spackles of shinning-light signaling opportunities ahead.

We need to carry on the discussions/debate on this subject. We also plan to further integrate these issues in the mainstream work as we give ourselves enough time to understand the society dynamics and opportunities. Once again, there is a lot of potential for us to tap.

TWERWANEHO LISTENERS' CLUB
BOMA, TOORO RD,
P.O. BOX 962, FORT PORTAL.
Tel: 0483660032
E-mail: info@tlc-uganda.org /
gerald@tlc-uganda.org
Website: www.tlc-uganda.org