

## **Project Title: Strengthening Partnership for Anti-Corruption, Responsiveness and Citizen Engagement (SPARC)**

The UGX 3.3 billion SPARC project funded by the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) was implemented from June 2019 to May 2022, with an overall objective of having “a well-coordinated civil society influencing state actors’ responsiveness to transparency and accountability demands by the citizens.” The project addressed the weak functioning of the accountability chain institutions which has led to poor and incoherent detection, investigation, prosecution and resolution of corruption in Uganda.

This was done through strengthening co-ordination of CSO actors, strengthening local-to-national linkage, increasing citizen engagement and empowerment and advocating for increased state responsiveness to citizen voices in the accountability process.

The project was implemented at national level, with specific interventions in the following districts; Kampala, Hoima, Kibaale, Moroto, Nabilatuk, Iganga, Mayuge, Kalangala, Kalungu, Lira, Alebtong, Arua and Maracha.

The direct project beneficiaries included:

- 12 District Local Governments as listed above
- 100 CSOs including members of the Mid-Western Region Anti-Corruption (MIRAC), Karamoja Anti-Corruption Coalition (KACC), Anti-Corruption Coalition of Busoga (ACCOB), Southern Buganda Anti-Corruption Coalition (SBACCO), Northern Uganda Anti-Corruption Coalition (NUACC), and MAYANK Anti-Corruption Coalition (MACCO) and others,
- 13 Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) including Parliament, Inspectorate of Government (IG), Directorate of Ethics and Integrity (DEI), Office of the Auditor General (OAG), State House, Cabinet Secretariat, Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES), Ministry of Health (MoH), Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF), Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (MoFPED), Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development (MoGLSD), and
- 4 Anti-Corruption Working Groups (Education Sector Anti-Corruption Working Group (ESACWG), Health Sector Working Group (HSACWG).

### **Key achievements**

- 22 public forums for Government representatives and CSOs and/or citizens to interact were conducted. These included:
  - 5 local level and 3 national level engagements on the status of the implementation of the Inspectorate of Government (IG) and Office of the Auditor General (OAG)’s recommendations.
  - 2 Anti-Corruption Conventions
  - 3 engagement meetings on Anti-Corruption laws (Leadership Code Act and Whistleblowers’ Act)
  - 6 local level strategic lobby and and policy advocacy meetings

- 1 strategic lobby and advocacy meeting at national level
- 1 meeting to follow up on commitments made by duty bearers during the Anti-Corruption Week
- Four (4) reports from the IG and OAG to Parliament were simplified for layman's use. These included:
  - 2 Auditor General's Central Government Reports (along with 12 District local Government reports for 2017/18 and 2018/19)
  - 2 2 Inspectorate of Government bi-annual reports for July-Dec 2018 and 2019.
- The Project contributed to improved implementation of Anti-Corruption Laws in Uganda, particularly the Anti-Corruption Act, 2009 and the Leadership Code Act, 2002. Specifically, ACCU contributed to the removal of convicted civil servants from the Government Payroll, from 28 at the start of the project to only 9 left by the time project implementation was suspended. This was attained through aggressively creating publicity on the issue and having multiple engagements on the same with the Ministry of Public Service and other appointing authorities.
- With support from this project, ACCU's advocacy efforts also contributed to the operationalization of the Leadership Code Tribunal, which has since enhanced implementation of the Leadership Code Act, especially in terms of adjudicating breaches to the Leadership Code.
- 73 recommendations from the Inspectorate of Government and the Office of the Auditor General were implemented by various responsible government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) and Local Governments, through ACCU and other SPARC project partners' engagements and dialogues with these agencies.
- The Project employed a joint advocacy approach, which contributed to improve coordination and building of synergies within civil society, and between civil society and Government, which are beneficial for future collaborations.
- Through research supported by the SPARC project, a body of knowledge was created that is facilitating evidence-based advocacy. Vast studies were conducted on the status of implementation of key anti-corruption laws as well as the capacity needs of the various anti-corruption agencies, and these are informing ACCU and other actors' engagements going forward.
- At least 33 media engagements were conducted by ACCU and other collaborating CSOs on transparency and accountability issues to create public awareness and hold duty bearers accountable.
- Local level partner CSOs attained different skills and learnings, including use of the Uganda System for Electronic Open data Records (USER) to document accountability violations, funding proposal writing resulting in one partner – MAYANK Anti Corruption Coalition attracting funding from the Office of the Prime Minister. The project further built CSO capacity in areas of monitoring and evaluation (including developing monitoring tools and reporting templates), effective lobbying and advocacy.

## Challenges

- The onset of the COVID19 pandemic in March 2021 affected project implementation especially during the lockdowns. After reopening of the economy, there were still challenges relating to increased costs of implementation and stringent SOPs.
- Secondly, the suspension of DGF activities immediately after the 2021 general elections further maimed the already bruised implementation rollout as it resulted in an immediate halting of all activity implementation. Unfortunately, there was no resumption of project implementation until project closure time, leaving a significant number of key engagements incomplete.
- The security situation during the 2021 general elections also paused a huge challenge to the project work. For instance, some activities had to be put on hold during the November 2021 protests in which lives were lost in election violence.

## Sustainability of Results

- ACCU worked with existing institutionalized government structures like the Inter Agency Forum and District Integrity promotion Forums that have presence and sustainability beyond the project. The project empowered citizens with information on where to report, what to report, whom to report, how to report that will enable them to constantly hold the duty bearers accountable beyond DGF funding. The project strengthened structures like coalitions and networks that will continue to function beyond the project end.

## Correlation with the National Development Plan (NDP II & III) and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

### *Uganda's National Development Plans II & III*

- The project contributed to realization of Uganda Government programmes, such as i) the Community Mobilization and Mindset Change, and ii) Governance and Security Programme. By mobilizing citizens from the 12 project districts to demand for transparency and accountability for public services from duty bearers, the project influenced implementation of over 73 Auditor General's audit recommendations across the project districts and at national level. Project advocacy interventions also resulted in the amendment of the Leadership Code Act. Several Media engagements were held to enhance awareness on forms and effects of corruption, and the training of CSOs from project districts and at national level in Monitoring and Evaluation fostered improved reporting on key accountability issues.

### *The UN Sustainable Development Goals*

- The project contributed to realization of access to quality education, health and ensuring gender equality. The project successfully played a part in the realization of UN SDG 16, "Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build



effective, accountable and inducive institutions for all.” ACCU, working with likeminded partners, sensitized masses to avoid, detect and report any acts of corruption across the country.

The project contributed to realization of ACCU's Strategic Plan 2018-2022 and was successfully closed in May 2022. Successes, challenges and learnings from this project are being adopted in proceeding engagements. ACCU appreciates the partnership and support of the Democratic Governance Facility (DGF) in this project and commits to building onto the achievements registered through this project to continue to champion anti-corruption, transparency and accountability efforts in Uganda.