

# People4Change **act:onaid**

## **IMPACT ASSESSMENT UGANDA 2015**

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## **REPORT SUMMATION**

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## What is People4Change

People4Change is a unique capacity development program in ActionAid that provides a global approach to people-to-people support with a focus on the meeting and exchange of people and enhancing global solidarity. The program was started in 2009 and has offered support to all Least Developed Countries in ActionAid.

We facilitate the placement of skilled and experienced development practitioners who enhance the skills and knowledge of the civil society organisations that ActionAid works with, through coaching processes, critical reflection and grounding of innovative tools and methodologies within a local context. They also help to facilitate linkages between the local and national levels, and where relevant, link up to the international level. People4Change placements are always cross border placements due to a fundamental principle to promote global solidarity and cross cultural respect and understanding.

Advisors are salaried professionals with profound thematic and educational background. They provide strategic and programmatic support and are thought to link the local, national and international levels in the ActionAid federation.

Inspirators are volunteers, who has significant practical work experience from a relevant work area. They receive allowances and accommodation. Inspirators are typically placed with local partner organisations supporting either internal governance and organizational development or concrete thematic work areas.

*People4Change has placed more than 400 Inspirators and 90 Advisors from 2009 to 2015 in altogether 29 countries.*

### 1. Introduction

In July 2015, People4Change and ActionAid Uganda carried out a joint assessment of altogether 43 People4Change placements in Uganda. ActionAid Uganda was among the countries that piloted the People4Change Inspirator program in 2009 and has been one of the greatest recipients of People4Change support over the past 6 years both in terms of Inspirator and Advisor support. Therefore, the overall purpose of the assessment was to undertake an in-depth assessment of the longer term impact of the People4Change programme in Uganda. More specifically, we wanted to look at:

- What change, if any, that had taken place within the organisations and with the people who had received support from either an Advisor or an Inspirator
- Assess how these changes – if any – had contributed to concrete programme results
- Lessons learned for future improvement of the programme

The assessment team met with 74 % of all the partner organisations that had received People4Change support since 2009. The assessment team also met with 7 different local rights programmes (LRPs)<sup>1</sup> as well as community members and staff members from the national ActionAid office.

### 2. Findings in Relation to the Partner Organisations

From the visits to individual partner organisations, which were all based outside the Capital area, there is a wealth of evidence of organizational strengthening. Organisations have to a great extent replicated activities or used templates/formats/tools after the Advisor or Inspirator has left the placement. Organizational strengthening, rather than strengthening concrete programme implementation, has had strong emphasis in many placements. This has in most cases left the organisations stronger and more focused in their work. It is worth noticing that most of the partner organizations that have received support within strategy development and internal governance have also been able to attract new donors more easily, and thus their dependency on ActionAid Uganda as the sole donor has been lessened.

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<sup>1</sup> A Local Rights Programme is a geographic unit/area, which may be represented by a local ActionAid office, but it may also represent partner organisations only.

There are many examples as to how the People4Change support of both Advisors and Inspirators have led to concrete programme results and lasting impact as well. At sub county level public service delivery has been improved many places. Due to day-to-day mentoring and guidance, training on various governance and budget monitoring tools, partners and community groups have successfully been able to address local issues. Concrete examples of improved schools and health clinics as a result of this advocacy work were identified.

It is further evident that some of the early Advisor and Inspirator placements are still demonstrating their impact. For instance, the Building Local Democracy Advisor had supported Iganga NGO Forum to develop the concept of Neighborhood Assemblies; an idea he had conceptualized and worked with another national partner on. Neighborhood Assemblies are a forum for community members to discuss the community-level issues at local level and create a dialogue with local government authorities, to discuss these advocacy issues and discuss how to move forward together to address these. Iganga credits the Advisor in bringing this approach to them and supporting them to contextualize this to their own work and local context. Now this is one of Iganga's main areas of support within the communities, and there is an increased legitimacy and respect for the organization, due to their community mobilization and accountability mechanisms locally linked to Neighborhood Assemblies.

Another example is the Anti-Corruption Advisor, who specifically supported the Anti-Corruption-Coalition – Uganda (ACCU), and to some degree the coalition partners, on strategy development; this meant that both ACCU as well as the coalition members had a firm base to work from and that coalition members' strategies were aligned to the overall strategy. As a result, the Advisor helped strengthen the strategic direction for the coalition. The Advisor supported them on advocacy issues and coalition partners received training on monitoring, which was used for advocacy activities (i.e. cell phone based corruption tracking) that was coordinated centrally by ACCU. Today, a huge result has been that donors come directly to coalition partners; they do not really have to look for them themselves.

Finally, Inspirators placed around 2012 in the Northern and Eastern region, who started building up youth-led advocacy work, had had noticeable impact in terms of youth mobilisation and activation. One LRP Coordinator noted that prior to the Inspirators' arrival, youth had sat on the outskirts of the community playing cards and not interacting on development issues, today the Activista<sup>2</sup> groups are blossoming and youth are actively participating in groups focused on both economic and political empowerment.

It appears however, that the effect of having a roving Inspirator has had minimal effect outside the specified area for the Inspirator support, and it also appears that the less contact and interaction a partner has with the Inspirator, the weaker the impact has been. It also appears that Inspirators who were based directly at the ActionAid LRP offices supporting multiple partners, could easily become a "LRP-look alike staff" to the partner organisations.

The 4 workshops held with the partner organizations in the capital and district towns verifies that there have been significant footprints made by Advisors and Inspirators. In general the People4Change programme is well received and all partners appear to have benefitted from the placements one way or another. A majority of the partners had experienced capacity enhancement within monitoring and evaluation, internal organizational strengthening, enhanced communication/documentation skills or resource mobilization, which had led to increased organizational effectiveness. However, in the capital Kampala, there are partners where the organizational impact has been limited, due to potential mismatch in expectations related to the placements.

Many partner organisations have replicated activities that were carried out during the Advisor/Inspirator placements. Several partners elaborate on how they have continued using and institutionalized monitoring and evaluation tools developed during the People4Change placements. In general it appears as if there has been a strong focus on internal

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<sup>2</sup> Activista is ActionAid's global youth network, which has volunteer groups in more than 25 ActionAid countries.

strengthening and M&E in the capital placements. The results of this internal strengthening are – according to the partners - mostly linked to resource mobilisation, as having enhanced M&E skills has allowed the partners to better document their results and enhanced their legitimacy as an organisation, which made them more attractive to donors. Other than the partner organisations ACCU, Activista and CCG, it was difficult to assess the programmatic impact that the People4Change placement have had in relation to the other 13 Kampala partners.

It is worth noting that except 3 partners, ALL other partners and 4 LRPs represented in the 4 workshops assess that they have achieved results, which have primarily been attained due to the support of the Inspirators and Advisors.

#### **Better Health Clinics!**

Activisa Member and Resource tracker, Florence Adoch received leadership training and training in resource tracking by an Inspirator based at Pader LRP office. Before receiving training and day-to-day mentoring by the Inspirator, Florence was afraid to speak up. Today, she is an active Resource Tracker, a community member who tracks how public resources are used, in Ogum Sub-County. She has the courage to speak up and has addressed issues from a local health center, which had no mid-wife, no space for delivery nor room for women to rest after having given birth either. The problems were addressed at the local sub-county and today the health clinic has a mid-wife, a delivery room and a place to rest after giving birth.



### **3. Findings in relation to ActionAid Uganda and the Local Rights Programs**

Looking at ActionAid and their LRPs, there is also a wealth of evidence of LRP strengthening and programmatic impact from People4Change placements. Especially in the Eastern part of Uganda, it appears that the LRPs themselves have been strengthened at an internal organisational level and that there has been strong connection between the partner support and the LRP strengthening. As the partners' capacity has enhanced, it has allowed the LRP to work more effectively and better document the results of their programme work. In the North and the West Nile Regions, the capacity development of the LRPs themselves is less evident, although there are examples of knowledge transfer and replicated activities. In all LRPs it appears that some of the Inspirators – especially those who have been working for 2 terms - have taken over LRP staff-like functions and in some cases have left undesirable gaps when leaving. In all LRPs, it appears that the local community groups and Activista in particular have been strengthened as a result of the People4Change support and in most LRPs concrete examples of enhanced youth mobilisation, improved public service delivery and examples of youth having addressed corruption cases can be verified. Especially, in the Eastern and Northern region has the support for youth mobilisation had a noticeable impact. The youth Advisor has played an instrumental role in linking the LRPs and even the Inspirators to the national youth work. Due to Inspirator and Advisor support, youth, as a cross cutting theme has been mainstreamed into programming especially in the Eastern and Northern region. In these regions, youth now plays a significant role in advocacy activities at both partner and community level. Youth now play an active role in the community and have altered perception of their importance in terms of community and national development in the eyes of local and national level duty bearers. This has transformed communities, created more active Activista groups and ensured a stronger cross district networking and knowledge sharing as well as led to mainstreaming of youth work at the local programme level.



### Improved Access to Public Services

The Amuru Local Rights Programme (LRP) has received support from a People4Change Governance Advisor on community scorecards and feedback mechanisms. Local ActionAid staff, local partners and Activista members participated in the governance monitoring trainings delivered by the Governance Advisor. Now, 30 community resource trackers are using the scorecard tools. As a result of addressing various issues with the local governments, the LRP area now has improved roads, functional health clinics and

gained water access at some of the local schools.

At the national ActionAid office, a significant staff turnover over the past 6 years made it difficult to assess the impact of the Advisors placed in 2009 – 11. However, it is evident that the Youth Advisor has played an instrumental role in not only mainstreaming youth in the ActionAid programmes at both local and national level, but also promoted an attitude change among national level staff in relation to youth. The Communication Advisor brought in a culture of focus on documentation and communication management, and now tasks such as website management and high quality photography, can now be handled independently by the communication staff. The two Tax Justice Advisors have led to increased knowledge at the national office on tax and offered relevant international networks. As both Tax Advisors ended their contracts prematurely, programmatic impact is difficult to verify. All of the Advisors have provided a huge knowledge and technical boost at the national office, and acted as a strong link between the local and the national level, however their early departure left a significant resource and communication gap at the office.

## 4. The Outside Perspective

People4Change is a cross border, cross cultural capacity building program, which believes in the added value of bringing an outsiders' perspective to reflect on and to address a potential problem.

Many respondents, but especially the LRP based ActionAid staff, mention that it is good to have an outsider, who comes with a focused and concrete terms of reference. Unlike ActionAid staff, they don't get diverted and are not obligated to do a lot of other things, but instead can focus on specific tasks, which brings added value.

Some of the advantages of People4Change placements coming from outside include:

- They bring new ideas and innovation
- As outsiders they don't get emotionally involved in things and are considered neutral
- It enriches the program when there is an open and global perspective.
- It rhymes with ActionAid values of respect and solidarity

The partner organization LICO describes the benefits as follows:

*"It brings in mutual learning, comes with new things we haven't tried before. Sharing experiences from other countries is enriching. Hiring a local could not have done us any better."*



In general both the LRPs and the partner organisations value the fact that Inspirators and Advisors come from outside with a new perspective and outlook, although many underline that it is the attitude that makes the Inspirator or Advisor efficient. Many organisations remain in contact with the Inspirators and/or Advisors they have worked with.

At the national ActionAid office they agree that it has been necessary to bring in someone from outside. They explain that local resources may to some degree be available, but they would not have the adequate international exposure and ability to link to and share experiences on for example youth and tax related work outside Uganda.

However, bringing in outsiders is not problem free. The challenges may be that outsiders fail to understand the nuances of the local context and inability to speak the local language. It requires time for them to adapt and sometimes the isolation of the placements may pose a problem.

## 5. Lessons Learned

Overall, People4Change has been a successful program in Uganda and has had significant impact, especially at the LRP level. There are many documented examples of partner organisations and LRP staff, who have replicated activities that they were taught or practiced during the Advisor or Inspirator placement. All of the partner organisations and LRP offices visited had gained new knowledge and/or tools as a result of the People4Change support.

Some **enabling factors** were identified during the assessment:

- The fact that the program is so well embraced and welcomed by partners and LRPs provides openness for learning.
- The fact that Inspirators (and in some cases Advisors) were actually present on a day-to-day level. This energized the support and led to better results.
- Linking the work of Advisors and Inspirators holds potential for creating synergy and increased programme impact.
- The cross cultural aspects of the placement does make a difference and is generally well appreciated.
- Additional capacity building modalities and activities may have contributed to some of these results, but we have been unable to specifically determine to what extent this has been the case during this assessment.

Some **challenges** were identified during the assessment and **recommendations & learnings** were identified to enhance performance and impact:

- There seems to be a very limited induction of the People4Change programme for hosting partners and AA staff. This may have caused confusion in regards to roles and responsibilities and led to an inaccurate and less optimal utilization of the Advisor and Inspirator resources. Concrete examples of mismatch of expectations between the hosting partner and People4Change placements were documented. ***To this end, People4Change is developing an online partner induction training, which should help to bridge this gap.***
- Partner organisations felt the Inspirator placements were too short (9 months), as it takes a bit of time for the Inspirator to integrate and understand the context of the partner and community environment. The Inspirator resource is therefore potentially underutilised due to the limited time span. ***To this end, People4Change will be extending Inspirator placements to a maximum of 1 year, starting in 2016. Additionally, People4Change will develop an exit framework to minimize the risk of gaps at the end of the placement period.***
- It is noted that most reports – both Advisor and Inspirator reports - lack a joint assessment report, which is fundamental to the accountability and learning in these placements. A reason for this could be explained by a lack of clarity around line management. ***To this end, People4Change has recommended that line management and reporting of Inspirators and Advisors needs to be streamlined and connected to the relevant programme.***

**Emerging opportunities & risks identified:**

- A large majority of the partners remain in contact with the Inspirators and Advisors after the end of their placement. This holds great potential for increased post placement solidarity work and mobilisation. ***To this end, People4Change will pilot an Online Volunteer Portal in 2016 to enhance the possibility for more capacity building support for partners and ActionAid, and to provide further opportunities for volunteering.***
- A major risk noted is the increased shrinking space and work permit restrictions, which causes delay in placements and potentially challenges the political space in which Advisors and Inspirators can operate. ***To this end, ActionAid Uganda is using other volunteering modalities to popularize the concept of volunteerism with government officials, to enhance appreciation of this type of support.***