

# CIDD-UG NEWSLETTER



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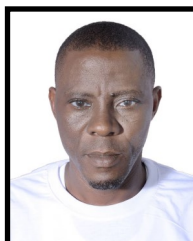
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## 1. Dear Partners,



I would like to express my deep appreciation to all our partners, particularly the Uganda National NGO Forum and the Royal Danish Embassy through the PACER Programme, for enabling the implementation of the Strengthening Citizens' Engagement and Public Accountability (SCEPA) Project. I would also like to acknowledge UWEZO Uganda for its support in strengthening CIDD-UG's research skills.

In the second quarter, the organization focused on conducting social research to support evidence-based public policy influencing, mobilizing citizens, and promoting strategic engagement with duty bearers aimed at improving governance and service delivery in Uganda especially in the Bukedi sub-region.

Having implemented a number of activities during the quarter, I am pleased to share our second quarter stories for stakeholders benefit and thank you for your continued interest in the work we do.

Warm regards, Ejautene Fred CIDD-UG

## 2. Sub Regional Strategic Stakeholder Engagement for Pro-Poor Public Policy Appropriation.

During the period under review, CIDD-UG, in partnership with UNNGOF and with funding from the Royal Danish Embassy (RDE) under the PACER Programme, conducted sub regional stakeholder engagement meetings. These engagements brought together over 200 regional leaders across the seven districts of the Bukedi sub-region, including political party leaders, religious leaders, security agencies, and opinion leaders. The objective was to review and enrich citizen-generated needs and aspirations gathered through the TOPOWA community conversations.

This multi-stakeholder regional dialogue marked a key milestone in the co-creation of the National Citizens' Charter a people-driven issue document aimed at guiding the next phase of Uganda's leadership agenda (2026–2031) toward more responsive, transparent, and accountable service delivery.

As a key outcome of the stakeholder engagement meetings, citizens and their leaders developed a set of shared regional priorities and a clearly defined political agenda in preparation for the 2025/2026 general elections. This document is expected to serve as a blueprint for citizens to demand accountability and transparency from public officials and leaders.

CIDD-UG remains committed to playing a catalytic role in ensuring that these issues are filtered through to the national level for further discussion and consultation.

CIDD-UG remains committed to playing a catalytic role in ensuring that these issues are filtered through to the national level for further discussion and consultation. This process will contribute to the development of a National Citizens' Manifesto, which will empower citizens to hold leaders accountable, challenge centers of power, build inclusive governance systems, and promote people-centered development.



Mr.Ejautene Fred delivers his opening remarks during the Bukedi Regional Consensus Building Workshop held in Budaka in June 2025

### 3. Engagement voice.

"Our civic engagements have always led to leaders' self-reflection and have inspired many of them to consider how to better serve humanity. The quote below is a true reflection of the value of every donor coin CIDD-UG receives to build resilient communities.

"As local government leaders, we are at a crossroads. The people of Bukedi and indeed across Uganda are no longer just asking for services; they are demanding integrity, results, and responsible leadership. It is time we stop electing individuals based solely on political excitement and start choosing leaders grounded in values, vision, and competence.

We need leaders, not politicians. Why? Because Politicians chase applause; leaders pursue accountability. Politicians focus on the next election;

true leaders focus on the next generation. If we are serious about transforming our communities, then we must elevate the standards for public office. That starts with a policy shift on qualifications for elected officials, but it must also be backed by civic education and performance-based recognition."

"As Chairperson of the ULGA Speakers Association, I reaffirm our collective responsibility to lead with purpose, build institutional trust, and uphold the dignity of service. Let the era of empty rhetoric end. Uganda needs servant leaders, those who walk the talk." Thanks CIDD-UG for organizing this very important event and continue to reawakening Ugandans. Said the **District Speaker, Butebo District Local Government and Chairperson, ULGA Speakers Association during the regional dialogue.**

### 4. District Stakeholder Engagement for Pro-Poor Agenda Setting

During the quarter ending June 30th, 2025, CIDD-UG, in partnership with UNNGOF, organized district-level validation meetings aimed at galvanizing lower local-level aspirations collected through TOPOWA community conversations. These meetings were convened to discuss and validate the issues raised during citizen consultations at the community level. The district-level stakeholder



**Ms. Nakirya Annet, the convener from Nansanga Sub-County, submitting during the Budaka District Validation Meeting**

consultations that has engaged over 200 both community members provided a platform for key stakeholders including civil society organizations, political leaders, government officials, and others to review and provide input on the outcomes of the lower-level citizen consultations (TOPOWA conversations).

The primary benefit of this activity was not only the enhanced ownership of key development concerns raised by the local population, but also the cross service delivery experience sharing and inclusive generation of local aspirations for aggregation in the regional issues paper, which is expected to form the basis for the proposed regional citizen charters.

By the end of the district-level meetings, both citizens and their leaders had been mobilized around shared needs and aspirations. Additionally, the meetings achieved the necessary district-level consensus on key 2025–2031 development priorities, against which the next leadership will be held accountable for improved public service delivery.

CIDD-UG is aware that enhanced community knowledge and demand for their civic rights while exercising their responsibilities is a bedrock of good governance. The organization, therefore, intends to continue nurturing these local discussions among communities to ensure the sustainability of dialogue around critical issues affecting community development. This ongoing engagement will foster downward accountability and improve the delivery of social services related to health, education, and agriculture for the local population.



## 5. Youth digital skills for effective youth-led social research - Eastern Uganda



Mr. Kyawolya Asuman presenting during the digital Pilot Training held in Budaka District

During the quarter ending 31<sup>st</sup> June 2025, Citizen Initiative for Democracy and Development – Uganda (CIDD-UG) built the capacity of **20 young people** in Eastern Uganda to use digital **tools for participatory social research**. This initiative, implemented in partnership with **Uwezo Uganda** and supported by the **People's Action for Learning (PAL) Network**, aims to empower youth to take an active role in generating **reliable, community-driven data** on level of children's education learning outcomes specifically in **numeracy and reading competencies through citizen led assessments**.

This initiative contributes directly to Sustainable Development Goal 4, Target 4.1, which focuses on ensuring that all girls and boys complete free, equitable, and quality primary and secondary education with relevant learning outcomes.

Through this intervention, CIDD-UG is not only fostering youth leadership in social accountability but also plays a key role in strengthening the role of communities in shaping education policies using data to tracking progress in learning achievement at the grassroots and national level.

The continued development of youth capacities in our area of operation will then mean a well built and skilled group of young people able to influence public policy from the point of information and knowledge while using data to engage for improved service delivery in social sectors for improved young people development in the country.

## 6. CIDD-UG and Uwezo Uganda Pilot International Common Assessment in Budaka District

In the related development and as part of ongoing shared efforts to promote evidence-based education policy advocacy, Citizen Initiative for Democracy and Development – Uganda (CIDD-UG), in collaboration with Uwezo Uganda, successfully conducted a pilot phase of the International Common Assessment on Numeracy and Reading (ICAN/ICARe) in Budaka District. The community-led assessment formed part of a broader initiative spearheaded by the People's Action for Learning (PAL) Network, implemented across 14 countries in the Global South, including Uganda. The pilot targeted children aged **5 to 16 years** and aimed to generate **reliable, comparable data** on **foundational learning outcomes in numeracy and reading**. The findings from the ICAN/ICARe assessment are intended to inform a wide range of stakeholders including **parents, teachers, local leaders, and**



Children participating in the ICAN/ICARe pilot assessment in Budaka District

**and policymakers** about the current state of foundational learning at the grassroots level. The approach is rooted in empowering communities with data to drive demand for quality education and influence policy decisions that reflect local realities.

This initiative also aligns with **Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education)**, specifically **Target 4.1**, which emphasizes that all children should achieve **minimum proficiency levels** in literacy and numeracy by the end of primary education in Uganda. This approach reinforces CIDD-UG's strong commitment to **citizen-led social research** and **youth participation** in education monitoring. It also marks an important step toward **inclusive and equitable education for all**, ensuring that No Child is Left Behind!

## 7. Engagement for free civic space.

### During the reporting period, the Citizen Initiative for Democracy and Development

– Uganda (CIDD-UG), in a strategic effort to ensure balanced implementation of the law and to create a level playing field for civic activities, spearheaded a civic space dialogue. This dialogue, conducted between state and non-state actors particularly law implementers was aimed at fostering trust and mutual understanding between these implementers and citizens, who hold the constitutional right to participate in civic



activities. The goal was to promote balanced implementation of legal, policy, and institutional frameworks that support meaningful civic engagement in the Bukedi sub-region.

This initiative is part of a broader effort to shape the **2025–2030 leadership agenda**, ensuring that institutions responsible for law enforcement, such as the police, are fully cognizant of citizens' constitutional rights to participate in governance and to have their voices and needs heard.

Through structured dialogues, CIDD-UG is diligently working to bridge the gap between government institutions and civil society actors, with the aim of fostering a freer civic space that supports inclusive, participatory, and accountable leadership in Uganda. Central to this effort is the recognition that inclusive governance is rooted in strong collaboration between the state and civil society collaboration that forms the foundation for sustainable development.

CIDD-UG is creating avenues for community voices to influence public decision-making and for duty bearers to respond to citizens' priorities with greater transparency and accountability rather than closing civic space through coercive laws aimed at restraining civil society operations.

CIDD-UG remains committed to building strong partnerships with government institutions, civil society organizations, and community leaders to establish a governance system where citizens are not merely beneficiaries but active co-creators of public policy and development, as Uganda prepares for its next leadership cycle.

## 8. Building and sustaining new strategic CSO and CBO civic alliance for results



Citizen Initiative for Democracy and Development – Uganda (CIDD-UG) has continued to invest in building and sustaining strategic partnerships with key Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) across the Bukedi sub-region. These partnerships are critical to enhancing both the effectiveness and long-term sustainability of CIDD-UG governance initiatives and projects.

During the period under review, CIDD-UG mapped and mobilized strategic CSO partners to support the planning and successful execution of the Regional

Consensus-Building Meeting on governance and service delivery. Among the key partners identified were the Foundation for Open Development (FOD), Tororo Anti-Corruption Coalition (TACC), Bukedi Anti-Corruption Coalition (BACC) and Women's Action for Community Development (WACODE) among others both of whom demonstrated strong commitment to advancing civic dialogue and regional development goals.

Through a series of joint planning meetings, these partners worked closely with CIDD-UG to co-design strategies that ensured the effectiveness and inclusivity of the regional dialogue. These collaborative engagements led to the development of practical, context-driven approaches, resulting in a well-coordinated and impactful interventions. This experience reinforced the importance of local partnership and shared ownership in program delivery. It also emphasized that collaborations are essential not only for immediate success but for ensuring the continuity and relevance of civic engagement initiatives beyond the lifecycle of external funding.

Moving forward, CIDD-UG is committed to expanding and deepening strategic alliances with civil society actors, local leaders, and development partners across Bukedi. These efforts aim to strengthen regional civic networks that can sustain citizen participation, governance accountability, and people-centered development in the long term.



## 9. Our stories of change and value for money engagements

### ***“Community accountability revives borehole to ease access to clean and safe drinking water in Omongo, Gogonyo- Pallisa District”***

For over five years, residents of Omongo in Gogonyo Village endured life without access to clean and safe drinking water. A borehole that had been constructed in the 2019 financial year broke down shortly after installation, and despite several budget allocations for operation and maintenance (O&M) by the sub-county, the water source remained in disrepair. As a result, the community was forced to rely on the nearby river,



Abandoned situation

exposing themselves to serious health risks associated with unsafe drinking water.

Frustrated by years of neglect, the residents began to organize and speak out through TOPOWA

conversations, a platform designed to promote community engagement and demand accountability from leaders. These discussions were made possible through

the support of Citizen Initiative for Democracy and Development Uganda (CIDD-UG) under the SCEPA project, which provided the community with the tools and knowledge to hold their leaders responsible for poor service delivery.

During one of the TOPOWA village conversations, the community members raised concerns about the broken borehole and the unexplained delays in its repair

despite repeated budget provisions. Their collective voice led to an accountability meeting with local leaders from Gogonyo Sub-county, during which the residents demanded a clear explanation and immediate action.

Faced with mounting pressure and an increasingly informed and vocal community, the sub-county leadership responded swiftly. Within days of the meeting, the long-abandoned borehole was finally repaired at a cost of UGX 370,000 in April 2025, restoring access to safe drinking water for over 500 residents of Omong village, Akuoro Parish in



Repaired borehole restored through community-led advocacy efforts

Gogonyo Sub County. The result was a dramatic and immediate improvement in public health, convenience, and quality of life.

This success story is a powerful testament to the power of community-driven accountability and the impact of CIDD-UG training held in February 2025 knowledge-sharing with TOPOWA groups and the effectiveness of sustained civic engagement in influencing local governance.

### **10. “TOPOWA Conversations inspire Kedi Apulasi to Step into Leadership in Pallisa District”**

Imesa Apulasi Kedi, a 52-year-old resident of Gogonyo, has long been a committed grassroots leader. She has served as Chairperson of the Oboborio Ketijoto Ichan Reflect Action Group and secretary on the Local Council One (LCI) Committee in her village since 2018. However, it was a transformative experience during the *TOPOWA Conversations* organized by Citizen Initiative for Democracy and Development Uganda (CIDD-UG) in partnership with the Uganda National NGO Forum (UNNGOF) under the Strengthening Citizens’ Engagement and Public Accountability (SCEPA) project that reshaped her perspective on leadership.

The civic meeting focused on a critical theme: the importance of women assuming leadership positions to ensure their voices and aspirations are heard in both local and national decision-making processes. This message deeply resonated with Apulasi, who had personally experienced and witnessed the persistent marginalization of women and youth in her community.

Motivated by the discussions and her lived experiences, Apulasi made the bold decision to contest for the position of District Woman Councilor representing Gogonyo and Obutet Sub-counties in the LCV Council of Pallisa District. Her announcement has sparked a renewed sense of hope and empowerment, particularly among women in her community.

Apulasi decision is more than a personal milestone, it reflects a growing movement for accountability, transparency, and inclusive, citizen-led development. What began as a simple community dialogue to address a broken borehole has evolved into a compelling story of resilience, civic awakening, and the transformative power of organized community action.

With strong backing from her peers and neighbors, Kedi Apulasi is now stepping into this new leadership role with purpose, committed to championing women’s participation in governance and ensuring that community voices continue to shape their future in Gogonyo and Obutet communities in Pallisa District.





## 11. Our work in pictures



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