

**TRANSITION  
INNOVATION  
ADAPTATION**

**2020**

**A N N U A L R E P O R T**



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**“EVERY LEADER IN CIVIL SOCIETY NEEDS TO DETACH THEMSELVES FROM THEIR ORGANISATION, AND THINK OF A FUTURE WITHOUT THEM ...STABLE INSTITUTIONS SHOULD NOT BE BUILT ON ONE PERSON, THERE SHOULD BE DIFFERENT FOUNDATIONS OF STABILITY, THE STAFF CAN CREATE THE STABILITY.” — RICHARD SSEWAKIRYANGA, ED EMERITUS**

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

"Strength through adversity. The strongest steel is forged by the hottest fires. It is pounded and struck repeatedly... The fire gives it power and flexibility, and the blows give it strength. Those two things make it able to withstand every battle..."  
- Sherrilyn Kenyon

2020 was for us the hottest of fires and indeed, like steel, we were forced to be flexible, to adapt, to embrace change. We could not have aptly predicted the extreme impact of the COVID-19 impact on NGOs and the way we work. All our actions were therefore geared towards intentionally managing the fallout from the countrywide lockdown and restrictions on movement and large gatherings, which have for long defined our operations as a sector.

As a Board, and indeed the organisation, we recognize that relationships between Secretariats and Boards are critical and must be invested in. 2020 taught us that such strong relationships allow organisations to weather any storms and manage any turmoil. Despite the clear and present challenges brought on by the pandemic, UNNGOF had to deal with change in leadership and manage the transition. In answer to the recurrent CSO health problem of Founder syndrome and championing best practices for others to use, UNNGOF wanted to be the 'blueprint' for partners in as far as managing transition and nurturing leadership. This cordial relationship between the staff and the Board went a long way to strengthening our actions.

Internal actions from as far back as 2016 culminated in the smooth change of leadership - we bade farewell to our longstanding Executive Director, Richard Ssewakiryanga, in June 2020, after eleven and a half years of his strong leadership and tutelage. To build a strong institution, there must be full commitment, investing time and dedication is critical for the success of any organisation - we applaud Richard for leaving behind an experienced staff; donors to support a stronger organization; new and developing partnerships.



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We welcomed our new Executive Director, Moses Isooba in October 2020. Moses joins us with varied skills and expertise in the governance arena, specifically, in-depth CSO Knowledge, Civil Society-Government Relations, Civil Society- Donor Relations, Capacity development, Programme development and management, and Policy Research, Analysis and Advocacy, inter alia. Prior to joining The NGO Forum, Moses was working as a Governance Advisor with ActionAid Denmark. He also worked as the Programme Coordinator of the Civil and Political Rights Component of DANIDA Human Rights and Good Governance Programme in Uganda. Currently, Moses is also a member of the Re-Imagining INGOs (RINGO) Social Lab – a group of Practitioners reimagining INGOs through disruption, innovation and systematic thinking. We are excited that Moses has joined our family and are confident that UNNGOF will continue to deliver its mandate over and beyond expectations.

2020 for us proved that for the stability of any organisation, the building blocks are people, programs and partnerships. We purpose to continue working closely with development partners to understand their aspirations and manage expectations so that there is a middle ground for both parties. Our partners both at the sub-national, national and international levels remain important to us and we have designed many of our engagements with their input and indeed guidance in cognizance of their expertise and context.

We also added two new funders to our coffers and armed with this new and different support from Ford Foundation under the Build Grant, and Giving for Change Alliance with Support from the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs for our Philanthropy for Development work, we are excited about re-imagining sustainability and how development is done, leveraging on citizen-led actions.

Of course, we could not have done this alone and we would like to thank each and every one of our friends, supporters, staff, donors, development partners, Government ministries, departments and agencies and stakeholders – You made this resilience possible, you made this happen. We celebrate you all.

We pledge our continued commitment to our mandate – provide a sharing and reflection platform for NGOs in Uganda, contributing to development and governance processes.

Thank you!



**Emily Drani**

Chairperson, Board of Directors  
UNNGOF





**FOREWORD**



Beyond just being the year that marked the end of a decade of declined resources and the struggles of many an NGO to stay afloat and continue operations, 2020 was for us the year that tested the true mettle of UNNGOF's last 23 years of existence. The status quo as we knew it was disrupted and we had to dig deep into our lessons learned, partnerships and ourselves to find a way to continue forging ahead. It was the time for us to offer leadership to the sector like never before and steer us towards stable ground.

2020 started off great for UNNGOF. Our preparations for engagements with the 2021 electoral process were in high gear. Our policy and civil society strengthening engagements were promising, and our partners were ready and willing to engage. However, the unprecedented outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent countrywide lockdown in March 2020 rendered the bulk of our well-laid plans inactive. Even after the lockdown was lifted, many of our activities and engagements were limited as we sought to respect the Standard Operating Procedures set out by the Ministry of Health.

Despite all our lessons learned, innovations and new ideas, there was nothing in our proverbial bag of tricks that could have prepared us for the effects of the pandemic on our way of work. Though we prided ourselves on creativity and innovation, the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to look further and dig deeper to find ways to deal with the havoc that this global challenge had wrought.

Technology, which for us had always been more of a support function, suddenly took centre stage in our lives and as an organization, we had to embrace it and its different facets in ways and at speeds we had never thought of. The IT officer overnight became the most important staff for the organization and our investments in IT bore a more in-depth examination.

We had to adapt to previously non-mainstream ideas for the organization. Working at home was a concept we had only generally applied ourselves to as an institution but the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to give this notion more than the cursory approach we had and put into place measures that would not only ensure that we continued working but that would not negatively impact the work-life balance of our staff.

Despite these challenges, with creativity and innovation, and of course in adherence to the Ministry of Health Standard Operating Procedures, we achieved a good number of our planned outcomes around elections and the training of civic mentors; SDGs and the 2030 Agenda; compliance clinics and support visits for the Regional Advocacy Networks; trainings on local fundraising and mobilizing support, inter alia. We focused much of our energies on managing transition and ensuring the changeover to a new Executive Director was as flawless as possible. In partnership with select Regional Advocacy Networks, we undertook the Tackle Corona project in 5 districts in the country to increase Communities' Preparedness to Fight the COVID-19 Pandemic; enhance food security to vulnerable communities; enhance Communities' Awareness on the COVID-19 Pandemic; and build knowledge and best practices on fighting the pandemic.

2020 was not a walk in the park, and 2021 is sure to present a host of other challenges. However, we remain firmly wedded to delivering our mandate to the citizens and the country, as creatively and innovatively as we can. We count on your continued patronage and thank you for walking this journey with us.

Thank you.



**Moses Isooba**  
Executive Director

# Strengthening Citizen Engagement in Elections

CHAPTER

ONE



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## CIVIC SPACE AND GOVERNANCE MONITORING

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2020 was a year like no other for civic space and governance. We kicked off to a very vibrant start with preparations for engagements with the 2020/21 electoral process. With support from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and in partnership with the Forum for Women in Democracy (FOWODE), we supported the setting up of election stakeholders' forums and the Citizens' Topowa Forums (citizens' groups) across the country. The idea was to ensure that citizens' participation in electoral processes is meaningful. Our work on electoral reforms was exhibiting significant outcomes, with parliament passing the electoral reform bills a few months before the beginning of the year. UNNGOF then set out to coordinate civil society efforts to influence the Private Members Bill – the Constitutional Amendment Bill, 2019.



## OPERATING AMIDST A PANDEMIC

With the civic space constraints, COVID19 made things much more challenging. We could not have anticipated the outbreak of a global pandemic that would cause the Electoral Commission to revise its entire roadmap and structure for the electoral process. The Ministry of Health Guidelines for COVID19 prevention would impose several restrictions that significantly impacted our citizens' organizing work. The ban on political rallies and gatherings of more than 50 people, put our planned community meetings and stakeholder dialogues in jeopardy of being ineffectual for having fewer participants than targeted.





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By applying and embracing new technology and through adaptive programming, we rose to the challenge and reached citizens and citizens groups across the country. We redesigned virtual meetings to replace physical meetings and employed media platforms, especially local radios, to disseminate key governance messages and host stakeholder discussions. We did all in solidarity and connecting with each other to share ideas and support across civic organizations throughout the year.

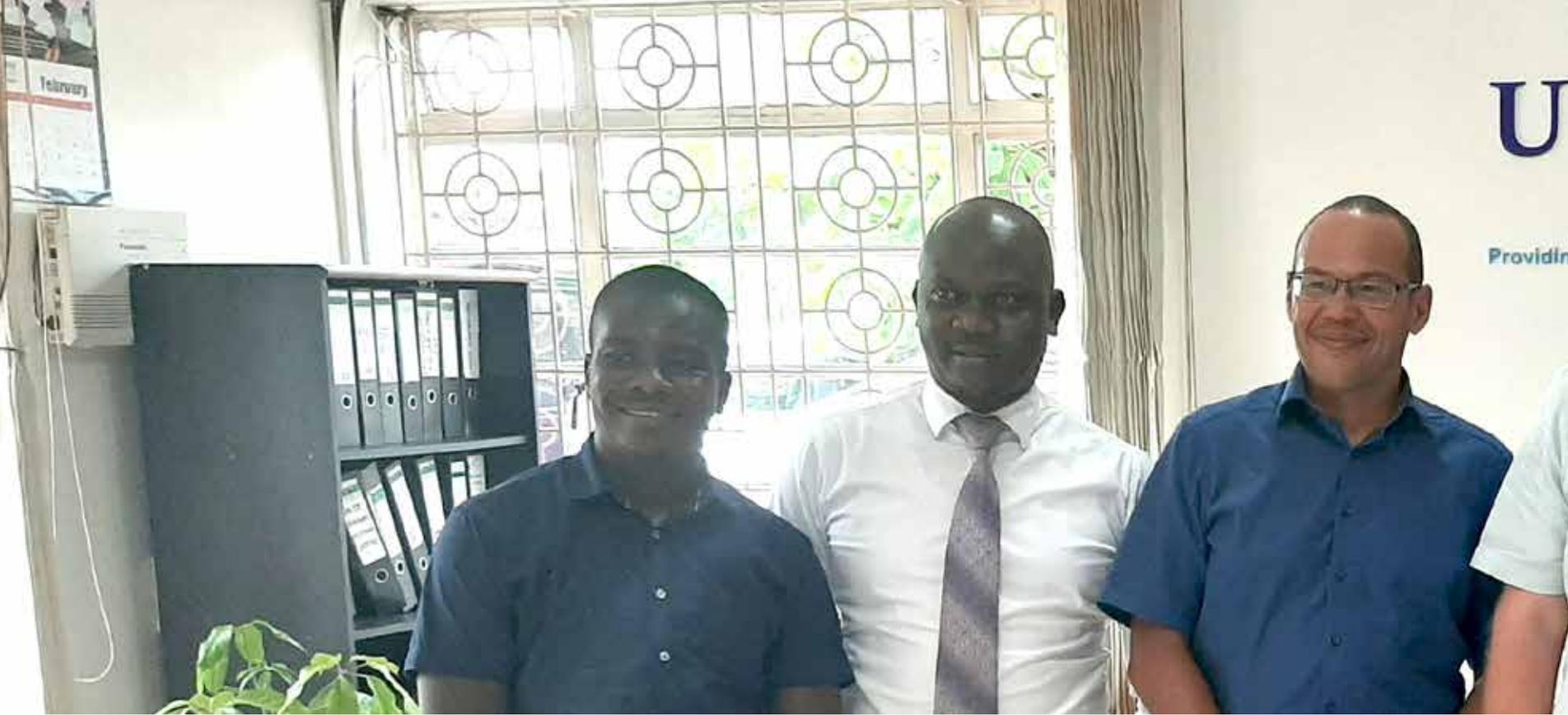


## INNOVATION AND CITIZEN-LED PLATFORMS

Despite the pandemic, we continued to push back on threats to civic space as well as organising citizens to effectively participate in governance and development processes. The informal citizens' formations that we set up across the country have become impressive platforms for citizens' engagement, information dissemination, and leadership training. The election stakeholder platforms are managed and hosted by our formidable regional partners across the fourteen regions have become breeding grounds for ideas to improve the electoral processes and platforms for consensus-building within the CSO sector to engage on key electoral issues. One of the most pronounced outcomes of this process was the Domestic Election Observation Collaborative Initiative.

2020 was also the year that saw increased attacks on civil society organisations and governance activists. In response to this, we intensified our tradition of regular interactions between CSOs and government stakeholders and trained more than 120 CSOs to improve their compliance with the NGO regulatory framework, among others. Collectively, the component reached more than 15,932 Citizens directly, half of whom were women and 60% youth. Indirectly, through media engagements and discussions, we reached more than 5,000,000 Ugandans across the country.





## PARTNERSHIPS AND TRUST BUILDING

The component's work was made possible through mutually reinforcing collaborations with various stakeholders including government agencies such as the National Bureau for NGOs, the Electoral Commission, and the Parliament of Uganda.

But more importantly, the reception, resilience, and willingness of citizens to engage with the component's programs have been the key pillar to the success of our civic space and governance work

# UNNGOF

g a Share on Platform for NGOs in Uganda



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## INTO 2021 AND BEYOND

As we start 2021, there is still a lot more to do. The highly contested elections riddled with violence has left fault lines in our society. The attacks on human rights defenders and civic organisations have also left deep-rooted dents in the relationship between the civil society sector and the Government of Uganda. These unexpected challenges mean that 2021 is going to be more significant than

ever. UNNGOF will focus the next year on rebuilding the trust and pushing back on the increased infractions to civic space. Civil society organisations and members of UNNGOF will need to carry out activities that contribute to national cohesion and restore the soul of the nation.

We shall need more ideas, more passion, more energy, and more collaboration. That's why the CSO engagement platforms will be very valuable. CSOs and Government Stakeholders' Forums uniting government and civil society stakeholders to discuss emerging issues will also be critical in rebuilding trust and mutual collaboration. With support from our partners, we shall build a positive environment for NGO operations and ensure meaningful citizens' engagement in governance and development processes. So keep reading and following our updates to find out how to get involved.



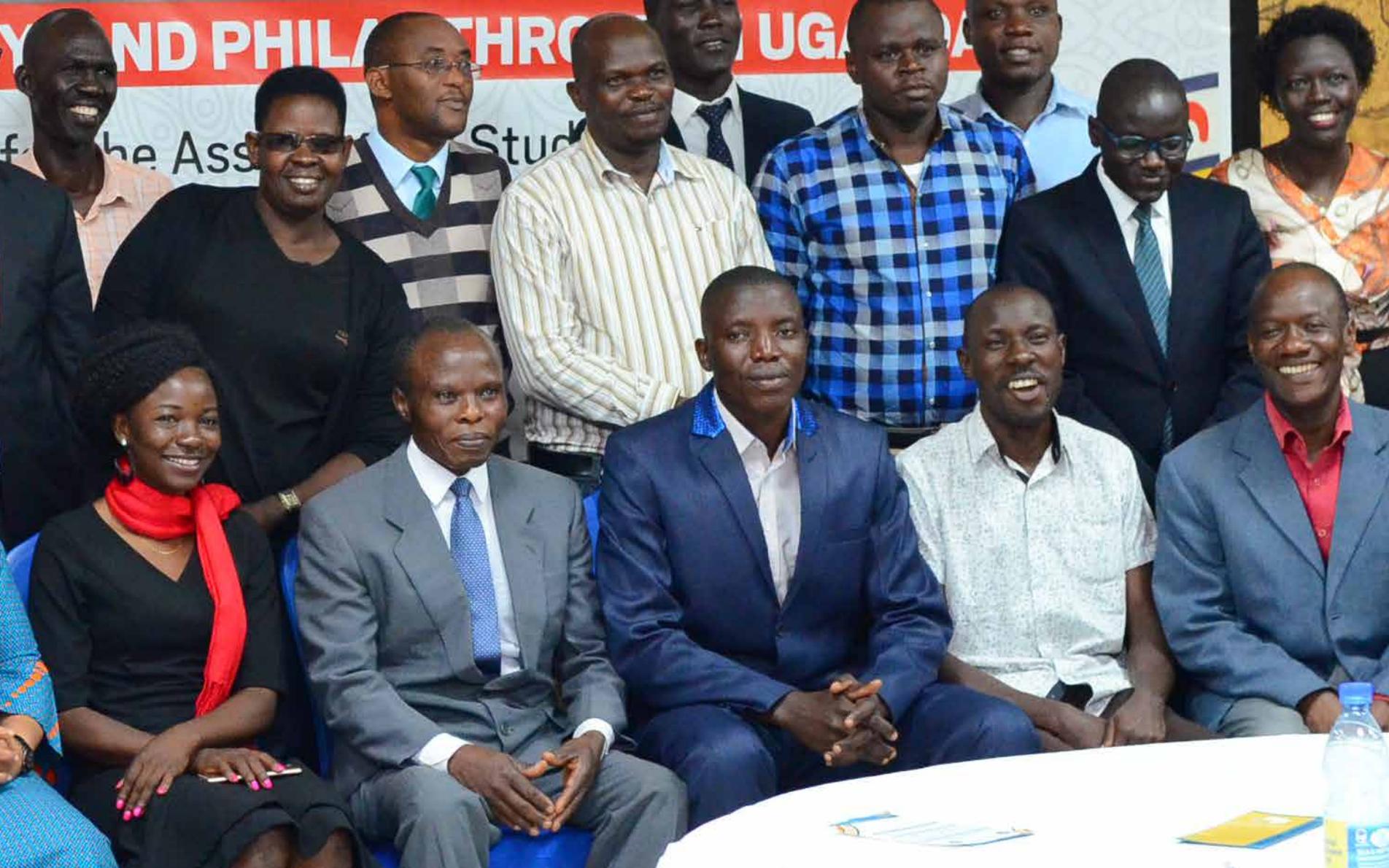
CHAPTER  
**TWO**

**POLICY ADVOCACY AND ENGAGEMENT**

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Policy Advocacy and Engagement aims to effectively coordinate collective policy engagements by CSOs on policy issues of interest to civil society, and relevant to Uganda's development, as well as for long-perspective planning.

In 2020, despite limited policy engagement spaces at all levels due to the outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic, we continued coordinating the Civil Society to engage collectively in key policy processes while observing SOPs as guided by the Ministry of Health.

## CSO INPUT INTO THE DRAFT NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN III

Over the years, UNNGOF has continuously convened CSOs to contribute to the development of the National Development Plans.

Upon the release of the draft NDP III by the National Planning Authority, a CSO consultative meeting was held to discuss the draft plan, and a CSO commentary paper was developed. Comments were made in the spirit of ensuring the NDP III represents the diversity of aspirations of all Ugandans including those in Government, non-State Actors and Citizens.

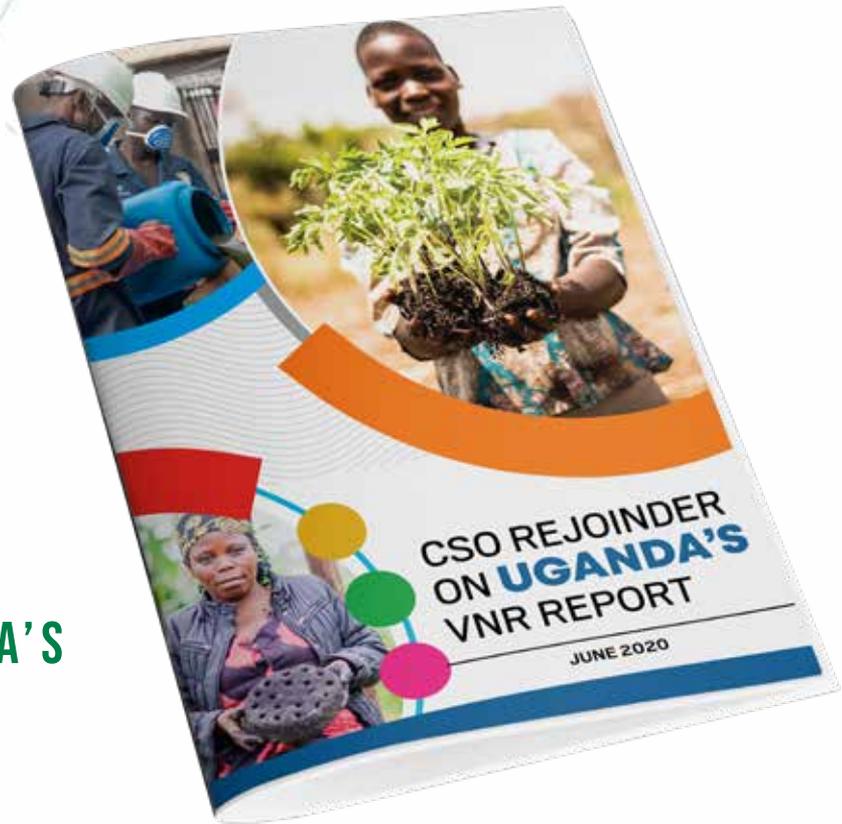
The focus areas were Human Capital Development, Sustainable Urbanization and Housing, Private Sector Development, Tourism Development, Strategic Direction, National Development Outlook, Community Mobilisation and Mindset, Climate Change, Natural Resources, Environment and Water Management.

As a result, CSOs also developed a fundamentals paper as a rejoinder to the NDP III that spells out critical areas of concern that Uganda should focus on in the quest for middle-income status.



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## CSO REJOINDER TO UGANDA'S VOLUNTARY NATIONAL REVIEW REPORT.



As the world marked five years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in 2020, Uganda was one of the 47 countries that submitted their Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) at the HLPF. As the host of the 2030 Agenda CSO Core Reference group, we intentionally strengthened our coordination mechanisms virtually with the Reference group members together with the SDG Secretariat to inform the Voluntary National Reporting process. Civil Society Organizations were a key stakeholder in the development of the National SDGs Progress report that also informed the National Voluntary Review Report due to their experience in implementing the SDGs.

CSOs under the Reference Group also issued a CSO Rejoinder to Uganda's VNR Report as an effort to highlight the critical areas of concerns that Uganda as a country needs to focus on as we embark on the Decade of Action under the most extraordinary times occasioned by the COVID19 pandemic. The Rejoinder will remain an advocacy piece through the next decade of action in implementing the SDGs.



## AMPLIFYING CITIZEN ENGAGEMENT IN THE LOCALISATION OF THE SDGS.

Citizen participation in the implementation of SDGs is key to fostering a sense of ownership in working towards achieving the SDGs. Uganda's Voluntary National Review Report emphasises several overarching areas that Uganda will continue to pay close attention to as the country works towards achieving the SDGs.

One of these is deeper localization and popularization of the SDG agenda. In a bid to contribute to SDG localization and promote the principle of "Leave No One behind" UNNGOF in partnership with ULGA and support from UNCDF under the Tondeka Mabega

Campaign trained 36 community facilitators in the 18 DINU districts to conduct Leave No One Behind community dialogues. Through the dialogues, community facilitators will create awareness, localize and domesticate the SDGs in northern Uganda.

The dialogues will provide a platform for marginalized groups to voice their concerns and aspirations in the implementation of the SDGs. They are also an opportunity for marginalized groups to share innovative solutions being undertaken to address the challenges they face in their daily life.

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## RECOUNTING THE GAINS AND CHALLENGES OF THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY.

Two decades of the East African Community have been marked by tremendous political, economic and physical growth including expansion to include countries like Rwanda, Burundi and South Sudan from the original three namely; Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania.

Moreover, the EAC boasts a combined GDP of over US\$ 193 Billion hoped to increase with several improvements in economic policy undertakings like the establishment of one-stop border posts, mutual recognition of standard marks through the EAC catalogue of standards and the EAC customs valuation manual.





However, the EAC remains largely criticized as an elite-driven entity focused on progressing commercial ties from the customs union, common market, monetary union and the political federation without steps to collapse its peoples' multiple identities into a united and engaged populace or establish clear channels to consult and empower the participation of citizens. In observance of these gaps and the need for a citizen-driven East African Community, Civil Society actors, academia and government representatives met in a high-level dialogue to reflect on the 20 years of the EAC and came up with key resolutions for inclusive integration over the next decades. These included; Regionalization of CSO activities and establish a robust engagement mechanism to participate in EAC activities, the need to invest in research and evidence as well as review the EAC treaty to enhance participation.



## ENHANCED ADVOCACY SKILLS AND PRACTICES FOR THE RANS.

The outbreak of the COVID19 pandemic in Uganda saw the breakdown of service delivery systems countrywide and also witnessed an escalation of health, psycho-socio, political and economic challenges as well as the emergency of its unique challenges which threatened the wellbeing of citizens. As a result, UNNGOF working with the Regional Advocacy Networks(RANs) convened a discussion on the challenges affecting communities in the different regions amidst the pandemic. The discussion informed the development of an Advocacy Issues paper highlighting key issues that Government needs to deal with as we fight against the vice. The issues paper also informed the development of the 2021 Advocacy agenda for UNNGOF and the RANs.

In line with the standard operating procedures issued by the Ministry of Health, CSOs at the subnational level took a pro-active approach and adapted innovative solutions to continue engaging policymakers on the key issues affecting citizens such as the use of radios and social media platforms. We have also continued providing opportunities and spaces for members to share best practices, experiences and learning on how advocacy can be heightened at the subnational level.



## **EMPHASIZING THE NEED FOR INCLUSION IN ACHIEVING THE SDGs.**

The global crisis of COVID-19 has deepened the pre-existing inequalities, exposing the extent of exclusion and highlighting that work on disability inclusion is critical. People with disabilities particularly women and girls are the most excluded and affected groups in society amidst this crisis. In September 2020, as the world commemorated the global week of action for the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, citizens, CSOs and other stakeholders are called upon respective governments to account and turn around commitments towards recovery in light of achieving SDGs.

In this regard, UNNGOF partnered with NUWODU and convened a National People's Assembly to discuss the impact of COVID19 on women with disabilities. Participants developed key policy and practical recommendations that could make the response and recovery inclusive of Persons with disability.



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## STRENGTHENING THE ROLE OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL HUMANITARIAN ACTORS.

2020, our work as the National Humanitarian Platform largely focused on improving the quality of our local and National Humanitarian Actors and provided shared learning spaces both virtually and physical where possible. With the outbreak of the COVID 19 pandemic, implementation of the planned activities slowed down, nonetheless, we continued to strengthen the coordination of the LNHA's we convened three steering committee coordination meetings and deliberated on the joint action plan implementation, role of the local and national NGO's in Covid – 19 responses and also guiding document for the platform was endorsed by the steering committee.

To promote information sharing, learning and knowledge management for better humanitarian preparedness, first and post-recovery response; the platform has been able to work with the members at field level to document interventions and best practices therewith and shared them widely within and outside the platform directory through newsletters, emails and publications. This has enabled the responders to the humanitarian crises to write their narrative and share it widely to the world out there to read with confidence.

We also focused on influencing policy and practice in the humanitarian agenda through; facilitating a member to participate in the CRRF discussions on the Jobs and Livelihood Response Plan (JLRP) and update members on different issues from refugee-hosting districts; disseminated the report analyzing the performance of contingencies Funds in partnership with CSBAG and also popularized charter for change among LNHA's, convened an emergency meeting to respond to national disasters and conducted a study on the contingencies Fund and Disaster Risk budget mainstreaming across sectors in Uganda.

As part of popularising the Charter for Change among Local and National Actors, the National Humanitarian Platform participated in the Humanitarian Week and the World Humanitarian Day. World Humanitarian Day was celebrated to remember the people who risk their lives to save others, especially the “unsung heroes” whose contributions go unnoticed.

As such, the Humanitarian Platform engaged in social media campaigns on Twitter focusing on celebrating Platform members and passing on “localization” messages to the public, participated in the radio talk show on localizing the Charter 4 Change. We also supported the South Western Humanitarian Platform to convene a virtual dialogue to discuss the reality of localization among local actors and recognize the local contribution to humanitarian response.



To improve institutional and technical capacities of local and national organisations in 2020, the Humanitarian Platform focused on improving the quality of its members through promoting the QUAM initiative. With support from DENIVA, we conducted sensitization meetings and Quam assessment of NGOs in Karamoja, West Nile and Acholi sub-regions reaching 80 organizations.

The QuAM sensitization was aimed at increasing knowledge, awareness and ownership of the reformed QuAM for NGOs. The National platform was highly appreciated for the QuAM initiative as it was timely given the fact that LNHAAs were facing challenges with OPM on issues of registration and compliance.



CHAPTER  
**THREE**

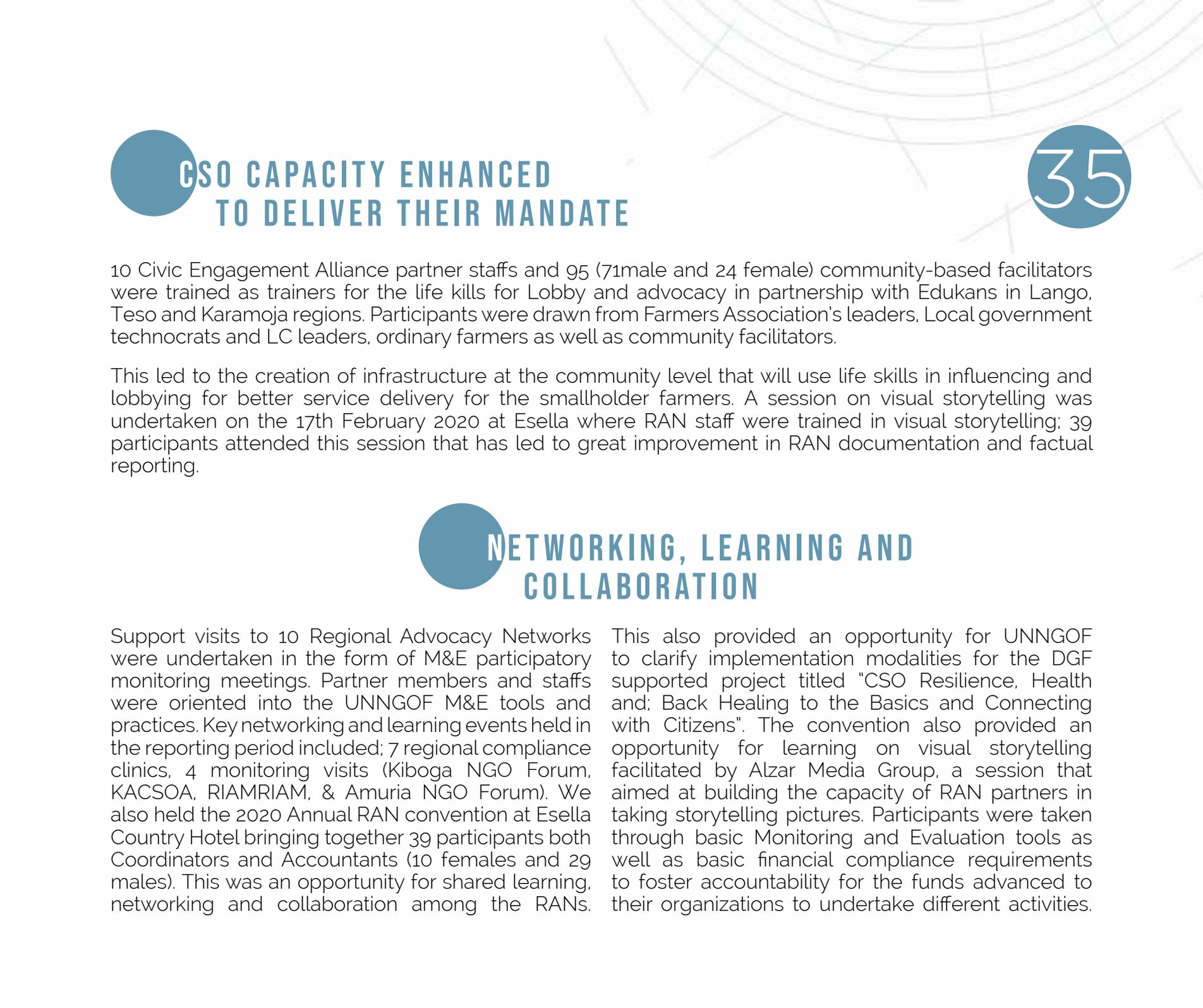
**CIVIL SOCIETY STRENGTHENING**

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The Civil Society Strengthening Component seeks to develop the capacity of Uganda's civil society so that the CSO sector can deliver its core mandate. We aim to strengthen the legitimacy, transparency, accountability and resilience of CSOs through training, shared-learning, mentoring and coaching programmes among others. Through our work, UNNGOF provides for instructive new techniques and methods of work, exchanging ideas, sharing experiences and strengthening mutual collaboration and partnership. In 2020, we unlearned, listened to our environment and adapted new ways of work to remain relevant and fit the new context after the COVID 19 disruptions. Below are the key highlights of what we harvested;





## **GSO CAPACITY ENHANCED TO DELIVER THEIR MANDATE**

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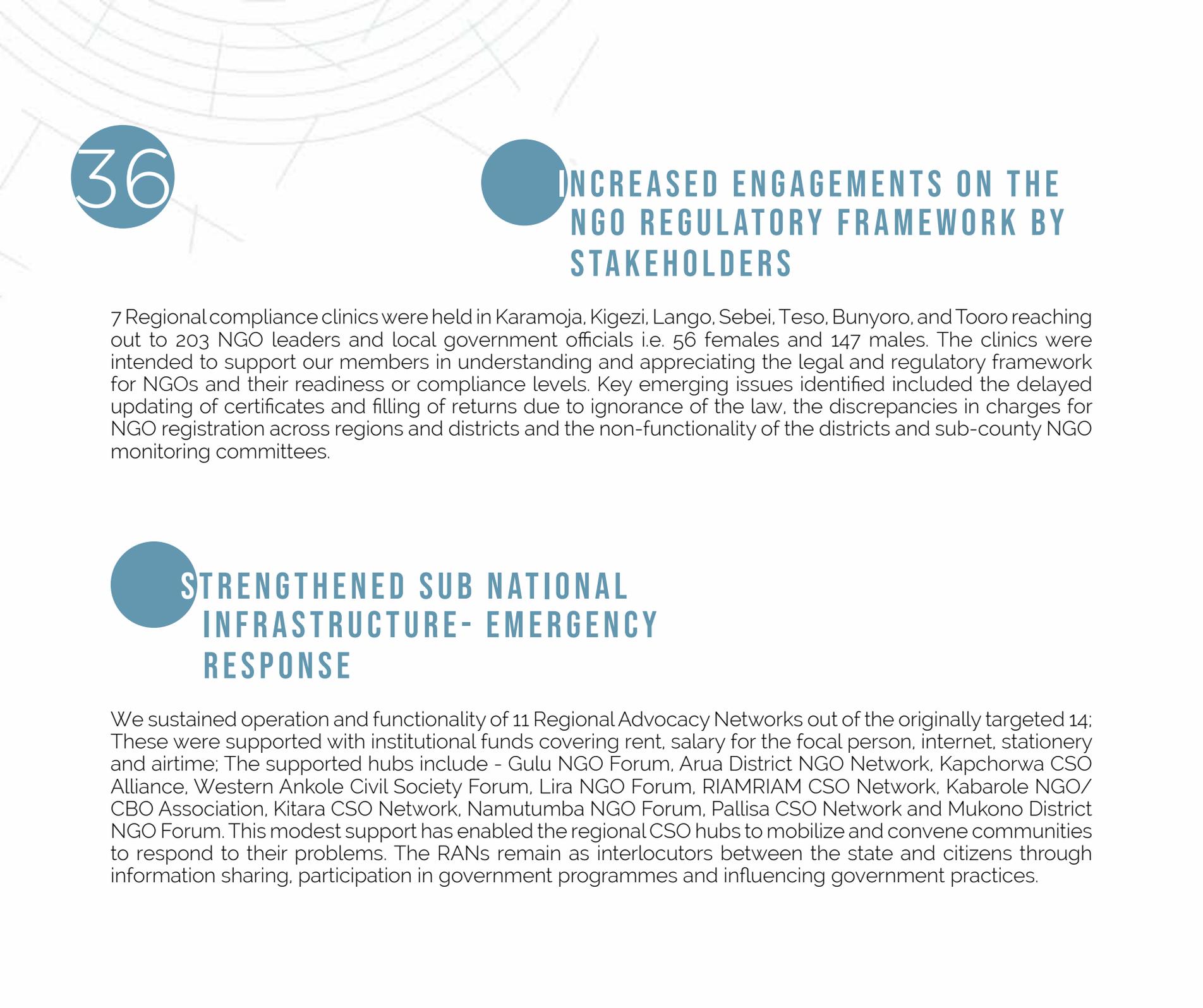
10 Civic Engagement Alliance partner staffs and 95 (71male and 24 female) community-based facilitators were trained as trainers for the life kills for Lobby and advocacy in partnership with Edukans in Lango, Teso and Karamoja regions. Participants were drawn from Farmers Association's leaders, Local government technocrats and LC leaders, ordinary farmers as well as community facilitators.

This led to the creation of infrastructure at the community level that will use life skills in influencing and lobbying for better service delivery for the smallholder farmers. A session on visual storytelling was undertaken on the 17th February 2020 at Esella where RAN staff were trained in visual storytelling; 39 participants attended this session that has led to great improvement in RAN documentation and factual reporting.

## **NETWORKING, LEARNING AND COLLABORATION**

Support visits to 10 Regional Advocacy Networks were undertaken in the form of M&E participatory monitoring meetings. Partner members and staffs were oriented into the UNNGOF M&E tools and practices. Key networking and learning events held in the reporting period included; 7 regional compliance clinics, 4 monitoring visits (Kiboga NGO Forum, KACSOA, RIAMRIAM, & Amuria NGO Forum). We also held the 2020 Annual RAN convention at Esella Country Hotel bringing together 39 participants both Coordinators and Accountants (10 females and 29 males). This was an opportunity for shared learning, networking and collaboration among the RANs.

This also provided an opportunity for UNNGOF to clarify implementation modalities for the DGF supported project titled "CSO Resilience, Health and; Back Healing to the Basics and Connecting with Citizens". The convention also provided an opportunity for learning on visual storytelling facilitated by Alzar Media Group, a session that aimed at building the capacity of RAN partners in taking storytelling pictures. Participants were taken through basic Monitoring and Evaluation tools as well as basic financial compliance requirements to foster accountability for the funds advanced to their organizations to undertake different activities.



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## INCREASED ENGAGEMENTS ON THE NGO REGULATORY FRAMEWORK BY STAKEHOLDERS

7 Regional compliance clinics were held in Karamoja, Kigezi, Lango, Sebei, Teso, Bunyoro, and Tooro reaching out to 203 NGO leaders and local government officials i.e. 56 females and 147 males. The clinics were intended to support our members in understanding and appreciating the legal and regulatory framework for NGOs and their readiness or compliance levels. Key emerging issues identified included the delayed updating of certificates and filling of returns due to ignorance of the law, the discrepancies in charges for NGO registration across regions and districts and the non-functionality of the districts and sub-county NGO monitoring committees.

## STRENGTHENED SUB NATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE- EMERGENCY RESPONSE

We sustained operation and functionality of 11 Regional Advocacy Networks out of the originally targeted 14; These were supported with institutional funds covering rent, salary for the focal person, internet, stationery and airtime; The supported hubs include - Gulu NGO Forum, Arua District NGO Network, Kapchorwa CSO Alliance, Western Ankole Civil Society Forum, Lira NGO Forum, RIAMRIAM CSO Network, Kabarole NGO/CBO Association, Kitara CSO Network, Namutumba NGO Forum, Pallisa CSO Network and Mukono District NGO Forum. This modest support has enabled the regional CSO hubs to mobilize and convene communities to respond to their problems. The RANs remain as interlocutors between the state and citizens through information sharing, participation in government programmes and influencing government practices.





## CHANGE THE GAME ACADEMY

Our plans for 2020 included the Return session for the October 2019 MS Cohort, the Change the Game TOT and one training for LFR and another for MS.

Two staff, Robert Ninyesiga and Racheal Damba participated at the TOT for Change the Game Trainers that took place in Nairobi Kenya - UNNGOF has now improved internal staff capacity from just two Change the Game trainers, to four trainers, two for LFR and 2 for MS..

20 organisations, translating into 40 participants, participated in the September 2020 Local Fund Raising training our biggest class ever. Unique to this training is that following the increased appetite for Communication related information, we adapted part of our sessions to include a photo competition which was judged by our photography service provider and branded CtGA cups and a bottle were given to the top three winning pictures. This helped bring home the lessons in how to tell our stories using photos taken on our smart phones.\

As it is paramount to have firsthand experience shared in order to not only convince the doubters, but also as a way of motivating others by highlighting how one managed to do it, we incorporated an inspiration session in the program where we invited an Alumni of the CtGA 2019 to speak to participants.

Mr. Faisal Nsubuga, from one of the April 2019 LFR Cohort shared his experience on how his organization, Katwe Youth Development Association, skilled its workers and volunteers as well as previously homeless boys and girls to carry out knitting, hair dressing and other income generating activities which have propelled them to economic independence. Many of them have now returned to Karamoja where they were originally taken from to come to the city as beggars.

The 2020 Mobilising Support training was also well attended, again, with 2 new organisations and the rest having participated in the September 2020 LFR training. This previous knowledge of LFR certainly impacted the uptake and understanding of the MS content. Two trainers from UNNGOF, Robert Ninyesiga and Sophie Kange, ran the training with two external trainers, Patrick Onaga and Sebastien Micheal Mukasa.

However, due to the Government accusations on financing terrorism that saw our accounts frozen in late November, we were not able to finish the training trajectories or hold the refresher for other trained groups.



## COVID - 19, STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES AND TRAININGS

Cognizant of the threat of Covid and yet aware that we had to run these trainings, we developed a protocol for the meetings/trainings to help prevent the spread of the disease:

Our first concern was the size of the training room and need for aeration to not only to negate the absence of air conditioning but to allow for social distancing of participants;





We purchased personal protection equipment for use in the training rooms and by participants outside the training room. These included sanitizer to be placed at about 5 different points in the room and both a box of surgical disposable masks and two reusable/washable fabric masks for participants;

We purchased temperature guns and took temperature readings at the start of every day and at the close;

We also instituted a health desk for participants to report any ill health or poor feeling and the hotel also had sanitizer points and adhered to the SOPs as prescribed by the Ministry of Health.





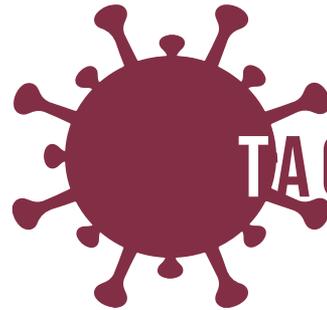
— NGOs

NAVIGATING



# THE PANDEMIC

44



## TACKLE CORONA PROJECT

Following the outbreak of the Covid – 19 Pandemic across the world and in Uganda, with support from Wilde Ganzen, we undertook the Tackle Corona project interventions in the 5 regions of Sebei, Karamoja, Lango, Bunyoro and Buganda regions, specifically in the districts of Kapchorwa, Moroto, Lira, Kagadi and Kiboga.

In consultation with our regional partners, the 14 Regional Advocacy Networks, we narrowed the choice communities for this project to the most vulnerable regions, specifically border communities, urban poor and most vulnerable communities – this was on account of our very porous and heavily populated borders that feature very vulnerable immigrant communities ( Kapchorwa, Moroto, Kagadi. They were also hard to reach areas where response services and or interventions by Government are limited. We also targeted peri-urban communities in the selected districts with informal workers who live from hand to mouth, street children, the chronically sick and the elderly who are dependent on the informal workers (Lira, Kiboga). The regional diversity offered an opportunity for us to strengthen community resilience across the board.

We worked with Riamiriam Civil Society Network for Karamoja region (bordering Kenya and South Sudan), Kapchorwa Civil Society Organisations Alliance for Sebei region (bordering Kenya), and Kitara Civil Society Network (in the Albertine region bordering Congo). While in the peri-urban communities, we will work with Kiboga NGO Forum in Buganda (Central Region) and Lira NGO Forum in Lango (Northern Region).

## INCREASE COMMUNITIES' PREPAREDNESS TO FIGHT THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

All 5 regions successfully conducted trainings for VHTs and procured handwashing facilities. These trainings in most cases were undertaken in collaboration with the district health team leadership and the current village health teams that were already working received the skills training on what Covid -19 is, its prevention, protection and safety for the everyday person.

The handwashing facilities and their placement in the implementing districts were chosen to suit the identified needs, security of the equipment and these facilities were designed and produced by local artisans/service providers in the region.

## ENHANCE FOOD SECURITY TO VULNERABLE COMMUNITIES

(Informal workers in peri-urban centers; cross border communities in isolation centers and those currently affected by landslides; elderly; widows; and orphans)



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All five regions procured dry rations to supplement the food for their targeted beneficiaries, consisting mainly of maize flour and beans. In many cases, this food had to be transported closer to the beneficiaries and in cases where bad weather had made the roads impassable like in Sebei region, beneficiaries had to pick their foodstuffs on foot from the district/subcounty headquarters

## ENHANCE COMMUNITIES' AWARENESS ON THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Several talk shows were held across the country by the different partners in the selected regions. In some cases, the regional partner offered the radio airtime to the district leadership and the health teams and in other cases the different staff of these organisations spoke on these talk shows.



To further augment the training offered to the village health teams, mega phones were procured for the 5 district partners to support the awareness raising activities in the communities on the pandemic. These megaphones will be utilised by the partner organisations but also offer a unique opportunity to raise funds from them from their hire by different organisations and entities that would like to use megaphones for their different activities.

The different poster re-prints of government messages on Covid - 19 were well appreciated and went a long way to cementing the message on how to stay safe from the Covid -19 Pandemic.

## **BUILD KNOWLEDGE AND BEST PRACTICE ON FIGHTING PANDEMICS**

Due to restrictions in travel as per the Presidential directives on Covid - 19 and extended lockdown for border districts, the physical travel for monitoring and evaluation and the collection of stories of change only happened at the end of the project when the directives on travel had been lifted.

We were able to collect stories, video interviews and pictures from each of the regions, with emphasis on impact and direct interaction with beneficiaries so that we could properly illustrate the impact of the project and measure success.

The raw footage is currently under review and development and one full video of the 5 regions as well as 5 different ones for each region will be finalised for further sharing with all our stakeholders. Also, a compendium of stories of change from the 5 regions is undergoing development and printed copies will be shared for further learning. We will also share these on our social media pages and with other stakeholders and partners.



## LEARNINGS & EMERGING ISSUES

- Its best to let the regional partners advise/decide on what works best for their regions rather than prescribe solutions/innovations from the capital city and expect them to fit the different regions. The consultations with the 14 RANs prior to the implementation of the project and even during the proposal writing made all the difference. This in turn empowered them and allowed for more organic interventions that matched our aspirations for the project.
- In many of the regions, the pandemic only aggravated other hardships that had nothing to do with the pandemic itself. In example, the people of Sebei region were grappling huge losses due floods that had destroyed their gardens. The villagers of Nakabaat in Karamoja region who just before the lockdown was announced at the end of March had been attacked by about 300 Turkana warriors from Kenya that overpowered the army soldiers present and robbed and looted the Karimojong of that small mining village of everything they owned. The pandemic only aggravated this situation further. These other circumstances were unforeseen on our part.
- In some instances, corruption on the part of the local government officials was noted, in the generation of beneficiary lists for people eligible to receive the relief food. In Sebei region for example, most Local Council leaders at village level were registered as beneficiaries even in situations where they were neither affected nor more vulnerable. This meant that other more deserving people missed the support just because they did not feature in the lists.
- The importance of partnerships cannot be over emphasises. Close relations and collaboration with district/local government leadership was a plus in the implementation of this project in the region. With the Presidential directives that made food provision and distribution a preserve of the government, our endeavours were only made possible by the longstanding cordial relationships that the sub national partners have with the district leadership that were eager to partner and support the prescribed activities.

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- There is need for increased social protection services to communities in the region; raising awareness on not only on COVID-19 but also on the dangers of teenage pregnancies and early marriages as well as awareness against stigmatization – all these issues were further aggravated by the pandemic and the resultant lockdown that had pupils and students out of school and idle among others.
- After support to help get citizens through the worst of the Covid -19 Pandemic, further support and empowerment to get back on their feet economically is now more critical than ever and we can only hope that the envisaged government programs go a long way in filling that gap.
- The attitude in the countryside towards the Covid – 19 Pandemic is that this is a disease that is miles away and for the people in the capital city and kills foreigners more than Africans. Only a few pay heed. The use of masks and washing of hands/sanitising is not very well adhered to unless one has to come to the towns or trading centres. Its considered a more urban disease and as a result, many Standard Operating Procedures are waived by the general public. Constant awareness raising is required to change this attitude and belief.
- The number of vulnerable households in some regions like Sebei and Karamoja was overwhelming – the food rations, though timely and of great need, were not enough to sustain them for very long. Some households were very large, having anywhere between 8 to 12 children and 2 – 4 adults; I Karamoja there were threats of raids from non-vulnerables wanting to steal this food; no economic activities ongoing because of the lockdown meaning that there were no options to diversify provision of food.







CHAPTER  
**FOUR**

**RESULTS, LEARNING AND COMMUNICATION**





## RESULTS MANAGEMENT AND LEARNING

The overall purpose for the results, learning and communication component for 2020 was to ensure that UNNGOF's core mandate is achieved through clear results management, brokering knowledge and learning; and creatively communicating our results and experiences to foster brand integrity and identity. This mandate called for commitment, resilience and ability of the team to establish systems and structures for the institution and partners. To deliver, the component strengthened the capacity building of staff and partners in monitoring and evaluation, communication, reporting and documentation. Some of the celebrations for 2020 are;

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

The M&E function evolved and progressed in 2020 to meet the growing M&E demands of the organisation. The institution invested in establishing a functional results team to establish and strengthen an M&E system, build the capacity of partners and staff in tracking and monitoring progress.

The results management docket is crucial for the achievement of evidence-based advocacy, effective decision-making, accountability and compliance to UNNGOF, partner and donor guidelines. While the unit is the results hub, other components are essential spokes on the wheel, adopting a participatory M&E culture within UNNGOF and its constituencies. In 2020 we worked with 14 RANs and 12 SCENE partners and institutionalizing the monitoring, learning, and evaluation function within their organisations. This was done by availing the required key M&E standard documents; M&E project data management Standard

Operating Procedures and developing databases. With the COVID-19 pandemic, we increased online engagements with implementing partners and donors, which inspired the development of data collection tools to improve the data quality requirements of the organisation.

Outstandingly, our SCENE data quality was found to be credible and approved for further utilization by the US mission office. This accreditation had a ripple effect on other project data quality, as we made adjustments to meet required DQA standards.

Further, we ensured that capacity assessments were made on partner capacity to implement M&E, which found that about 80% were not aware of the required M&E standards and had limited or no operational

M&E components. This baseline information has informed our M&E capacity building initiatives for 2021.

Over the year, we have built a partnership with Regional Advocacy Networks (RANs) and Strengthening Citizens' Engagement in Elections (SCENE) implementing partners, as well as the USAID Learning Activity (ULA), who have been pertinent in providing their advisory services regarding CLA and M&E.

The year 2020 continued to ignite a strategic relationship with the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBoS), through the statistics strategy, that will enable us to foster synergies with UBOS on data production and utilization.

## COMMUNICATION AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The institution successfully developed a knowledge management plan which will be popularized and implemented in 2021. We are still committed to developing a knowledge management strategy in 2021. Our brand integrity and identity is much stronger than before. We clearly defined to all partners and stakeholders who we are (our identity) and what we do using different platforms. We continued to not only glean and curate but also shared knowledge we acquired and that of partners fostering learning through capacity building of our partners and stakeholders.

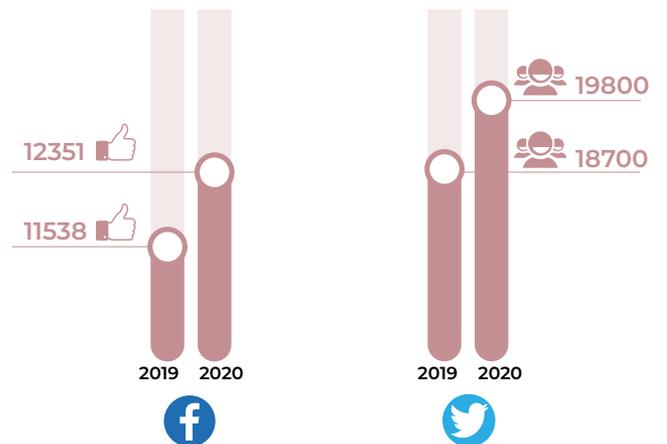


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We developed, incorporated and started the rollout of a visibility project dubbed #TheNGOBlueprint that proposes the setting of minimum standards for NGOs across different aspects, from reporting to finance management and many others.

## VISIBILITY

We re-designed our website, making sure we migrate to a more secure platform to host our website. We also adapted our index page interface to a more popular and easy to use. Our website is more secure and better protected from possible cyber-attacks.





## MEDIA RELATIONS

Our relations with the media have improved and collaborations between us and the media are more cordial. We are a resource for the media sector in regards to comments on Government proclamations or actions and as guests to talk shows or media events to offer CSO voice on popular issues that affect the country.



CHAPTER

# FIVE

FINANCE AND CORPORATE SERVICES





2020 started off quite well but then the infamous COVID-19 virus continued spreading faster from China to other countries, especially within Europe. On March 12 2020, Uganda made its official statement on the measures to be taken to prevent the spread of the coronavirus in the country. A few days later, reality hit home with the first cases being recorded on home soil and the country entered into a total lockdown.

As an organisation working tirelessly to create the blueprint for NGOs in Uganda; we quickly adapted to the new reality or the new normal and worked with Staff and the Board to ensure that our mandate continued being implemented notwithstanding the many challenges that presented at every turn.

Working from home; a concept or idea that sounded great and progressive in current human resource manuals as a way of promoting the notion of work-life balance suddenly became the norm and organisations were hit with a new reality or challenge overnight. UNNGOF was not spared from this cultural shock as it had to embrace technology in ways it had never thought of.

## STAFFING

Our long-serving Executive Director – Mr Richard Ssewakiryanga resigned from his position on 30th June 2020 after steering the team for a wonderful 11 ½ years to take up another leadership position within the region.

Due to his incredible leadership, the organisation did not suffer from the challenges of transition and on 01st October 2020 welcomed its 5th team captain – Dr Moses Isooba.

Another of our staff – Ms Clare Kyasiimire – Programme Officer, Policy Advocacy & Engagement resigned on 31st October 2020 due to conflicting personal commitments after serving the organisation for six years.

On 1st November 2020, we hired the services of Ms Miriam Cherukut and Mr Moses Mulindwa as Programme Officer and Programme Assistant respectively to support the Civic Space & Governance Monitoring component.



**Dr Moses Isooba**



**Moses Mulindwa**



**Miriam Cherukut**



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## GOVERNANCE

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We held our first-ever hybrid General Assembly on 30th July 2020 to ensure that we adhere to the provisions of our guiding documents. It was attended by about 30 members physically and over 70 members online via the Zoom platform. Members were able to receive and adopt the 2019 annual narrative and financial reports.

M/S MartinPath & Associates were confirmed by the 18th General Assembly as the institutional auditors for the year 2020 with a possibility of renewal given satisfactory performance. Extracts of the 2020 financial statements have been annexed to this report to provide a summary of the incomes and expenditure for the year following our financial regulations.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A new board was elected by the Assembly to steer the operations of UNNGOF for a three-year term as listed below:

1. **Ms Emily Drani** of Cross Cultural Foundation Uganda – Chairperson (representative of National NGOs)
2. **Mr Ryan Duly** of Humanity & Inclusion – Vice-Chairperson (representative of Continental, Foreign, International & Regional Organisations)
3. **Ms Claudia Apio** of Lira NGO Forum – Treasurer (representative of District NGO Networks)
4. **Mr James Kidulu** of Christian Childcare Programme – Member (representative of Faith-Based Organisations)
5. **Ms Caroline Masaba** of Share An Opportunity Uganda – Member (representative of National NGOs)
6. **Ms Margaret Nakato** of Katosi Women Trust – Member (representative of District NGOs)
7. **Dr Deogratias Kaheeru Sekimpi** of Uganda National Association of Community & Occupational Health – Member (representative of National NGO Networks)
8. **Dr. Akim Okuni** – Independent Member
9. **Dr Moses Isooba** - ED UNNGOF, Board Secretary

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## FUNDRAISING

UNNGOF continued proving itself as a formidable organisation to attract new partnerships. At the start of 2020, we signed a one year grant with Ford Foundation as part of the five-year BUILD grant to strengthen UNNGOF. In addition, we finalised a partnership with Wilde Ganzen Foundation to support the Giving for Change programme that will run from 2021 – 2025.

Even in the face of the unprecedented pandemic, our current development partners i.e. DGF, USAID, FORUS, Wilde Ganzen Foundation, Oxfam and WPF did not subject us to aid cuts but rather gave us room to adapt our running budgets to match the current reality which gave us legroom to continue implementing our mandate.

2020 taught us that as an organisation we have to be more flexible and adaptive to stay relevant in the sector due to the rapidly changing context as we faced several challenges such as the effects of the pandemic on citizen mobilisation or association; persecution from the government in light of the 2021 General Elections; and a delicate funding environment

## 2021 - 2025 STRATEGIC PLAN

2021 – 2025 Strategic Plan: 2020 marked the last year of implementation of the five-year strategic plan that was responding to a situation characterised by shrinking space of civil society, a debased citizenry, a crisis of CSO legitimacy and limited government response to citizen needs.

Consultations were conducted at the regional level to assess the level of impact over the last five years and generate consensus on what UNNGOF should consolidate in the next five years. This is in line with our core message of the 'Citizen is Central' and the next plan must focus on that.





A photograph of a group of people in a rural, outdoor setting. In the foreground, a young child is looking towards the camera. Behind them, several women are visible, some wearing colorful headwraps and patterned clothing. A large, semi-transparent yellow circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing a horizontal gold bar and the text 'PARTNERS AND FINANCIALS' in bold, gold, uppercase letters.

**PARTNERS  
AND FINANCIALS**



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



**FORD FOUNDATION**





UGANDA NATIONAL NGO FORUM (AN NGO & COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)  
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

ASSETS	NOTE	2020 Ushs	2019 Ushs
Non-Current assests			
Property and equipment	2	200,924,625	99,340,256
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Receivables	3	249,681,156	196,004,227
Bank and Cash balance	4	515,099,059	439,923,614
		764,780,215	635,927,841
<b>Total Assets</b>		<b>965,704,840</b>	<b>735,268,097</b>
<b>RESERVES AND LIABILITIES</b>			
<b>Reserves</b>			
Capital reserves	5	200,924,625	99,340,256
Restricted reserve	6	722,293,295	593,440,921
		923,217,920	692,781,177
<b>CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>			
Creditors and Accruals	7	42,486,920	42,486,920
		<b>42,486,920</b>	<b>42,486,920</b>
<b>TOTAL RESERVES AND LIABILITIES</b>		<b>965,704,840</b>	<b>735,268,097</b>

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021 on its behalf by:

Executive Director  
UNNGOF

Treasurer  
UNNGOF Board

Ag. Chairperson  
UNNGOF Board

UGANDA NATIONAL NGO FORUM (AN NGO & COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE)  
STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2020

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STATEMENT OF COMPREHENSIVE INCOME YEAR END AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

INCOME	NOTE	2020 Ushs	2019 Ushs
Balance brought forward	8	593,440,921	804,509,538
Restricted grants	9	4,219,475,140	3,639,894,120
Membership	10	23,176,900	26,278,000
Other income	11	50,804,627	98,321,741
<b>Total Income</b>		<b>4,886,897,588</b>	<b>4,569,003,399</b>
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>			
Civil Society strengthening	12	677,629,993	1,038,202,236
Civic space & Governance monitoring	13	1,253,807,215	954,227,650
Policy Advocacy & Engagement	14	140,135,512	317,956,100
Results management, Learning and communication	15	235,591,043	100,149,481
Finance and corporate services	16	1,842,596,530	1,549,027,010
Other committed expenses (accrued expenses)	17	15,000,000	16,000,000
<b>Total Expenditure</b>		<b>4,164,760,293</b>	<b>3,975,562,478</b>
<b>SURPLUS (UNSPENT BALANCE) AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2018</b>		<b>722,137,295</b>	<b>593,440,921</b>

These financial statements were approved by the Board of Directors on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2021 on its behalf by:



Executive Director  
UNNGOF



Treasurer  
UNNGOF Board



Ag. Chairperson  
UNNGOF Board







**For further information:**

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