



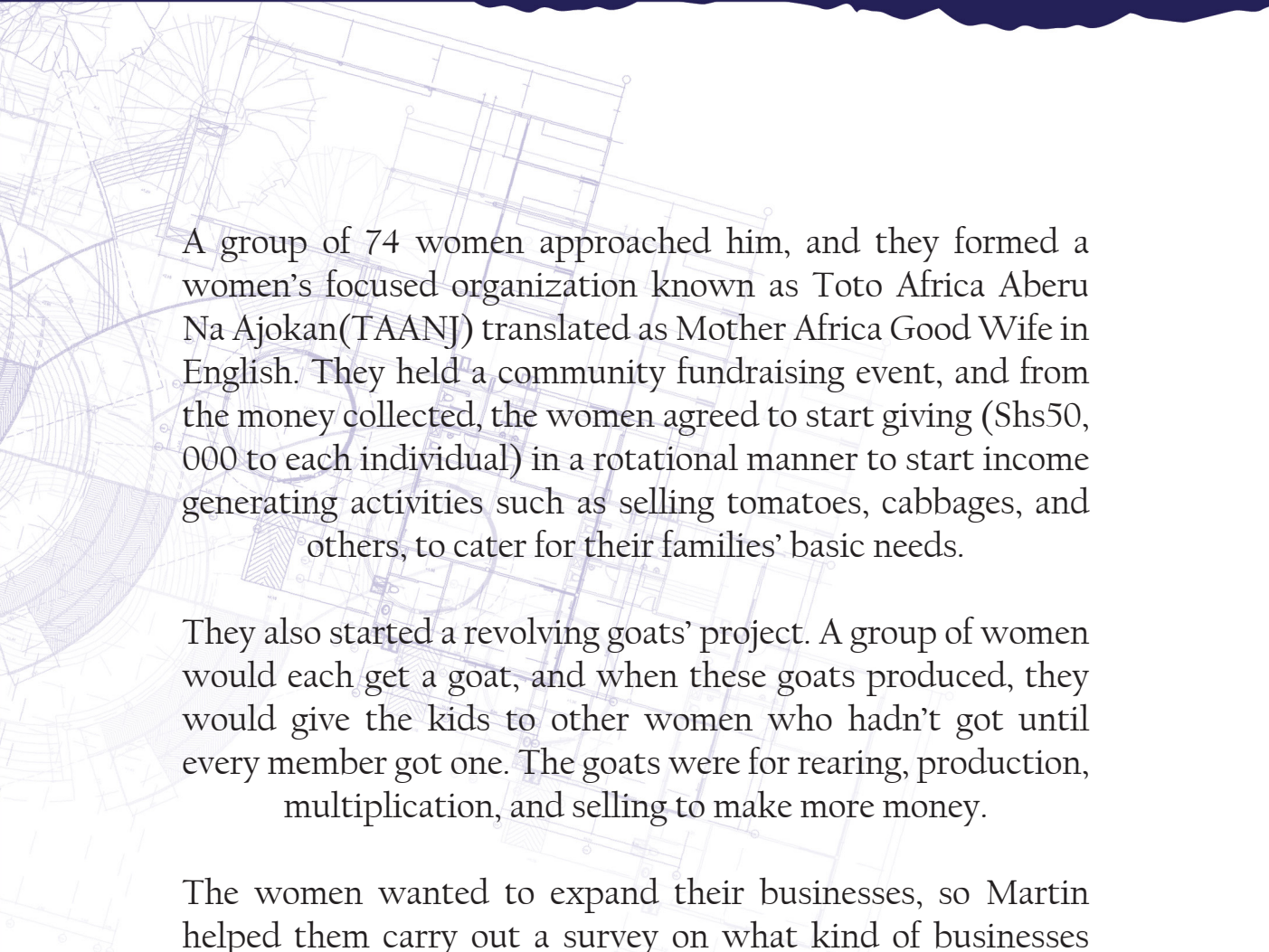
WOMEN AND GIRLS TAKE CHARGE: PROVIDING FOR THEIR FAMILIES THROUGH COLLECTIVE GIVING

Martin Aiko Ogwang, the Speaker at Uganda Grassroots Citizen Parliament (UGRCP), is one of the community facilitators who underwent training by UNNGOF in facilitation and mobilizing support, and acquired skills in resource mobilization. He also has skills in strategic planning, and conflict resolution.

Martin, who hails from Ngora district, says when he started interacting with communities, some community members, especially women, noticed something about him. He had leadership skills which they believed they could tap into, work with him, and find solutions to their problems.

“Teenage pregnancies were very high, there were increasing cases of domestic violence as a result of poverty, food prices were high, and some men were abandoning their families because they could no longer take good care of them after losing jobs during Covid-19 lockdown. Life was tough! Women were wondering what to do next, and waiting for external help wasn’t an option anymore.” Martin says.





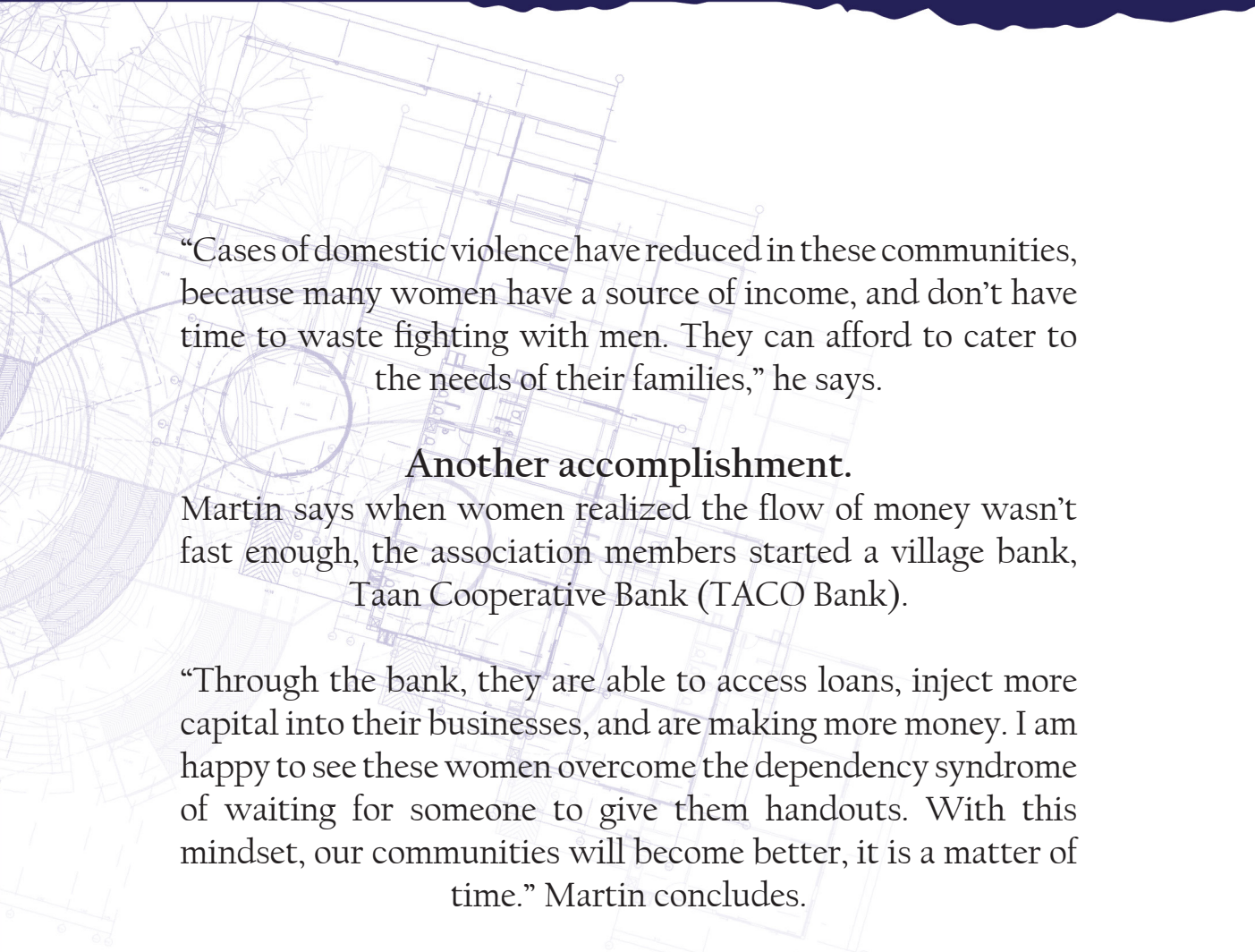
A group of 74 women approached him, and they formed a women's focused organization known as Toto Africa Aberu Na Ajokan (TAANJ) translated as Mother Africa Good Wife in English. They held a community fundraising event, and from the money collected, the women agreed to start giving (Shs50,000 to each individual) in a rotational manner to start income generating activities such as selling tomatoes, cabbages, and others, to cater for their families' basic needs.

They also started a revolving goats' project. A group of women would each get a goat, and when these goats produced, they would give the kids to other women who hadn't got until every member got one. The goats were for rearing, production, multiplication, and selling to make more money.

The women wanted to expand their businesses, so Martin helped them carry out a survey on what kind of businesses these women preferred. They found that it was poultry, and bee keeping. However, due to lack of skills, their birds (local chickens) were dying.

He invited people from NARO to train them in managing poultry and reduce bird-disease through vaccination. Currently, most of the association members are into bee-keeping, honey-selling, poultry farming, and their lives, and lives of their families have improved.





“Cases of domestic violence have reduced in these communities, because many women have a source of income, and don’t have time to waste fighting with men. They can afford to cater to the needs of their families,” he says.

Another accomplishment.

Martin says when women realized the flow of money wasn’t fast enough, the association members started a village bank, Taan Cooperative Bank (TACO Bank).

“Through the bank, they are able to access loans, inject more capital into their businesses, and are making more money. I am happy to see these women overcome the dependency syndrome of waiting for someone to give them handouts. With this mindset, our communities will become better, it is a matter of time.” Martin concludes.

By the time this story was written, association membership had more than tripled. The association has 300 women members compared to 74 when it had just started.

As told by
Martin Aiko Ogwang, Community Facilitator
Ngora district, Teso region

