

**Models for
Learning and
Sharing to Advance
CSOs Financial
Sustainability**

Governance

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CONTENTS

Introduction	04
Case Study Briefs	04
Case Study	07
A Tale of Good Governance: The KCDF Story	05
Executive Summary	06
1. Introduction	07
2. Good Governance – The KCDF Way	08
2.1 KCDF Governance	08
2.2 Benefits	09
2.3 Challenges	09
2.4 Future Plans	10
3. Lessons Learned	10
4. Conclusion	10
4.1 Conclusion	10
4.2 Replication Steps	10
Governance from the Grassroots: Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC)	11
Executive Summary	12
1. Introduction	12
2. Governance from the Grassroots: The UCOBAC Experience	13
2.1 UCOBAC Governance	13
2.2 How it Works	13
2.3 Organization Structure	14
2.4 Achievements	15
2.5 Challenges	15
3. Lessons Learned	16
4. Conclusion	16
4.1 Conclusion	16
4.2 Replication Steps	17

1 Introduction

The Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) was founded in 1997 as an indigenous southern-based, lead, and community-rooted organization. Since its establishment in, Kenya, the foundation has built a strong basis for community-driven development approaches and is unique in Kenya as a pioneer of community philanthropy and sustainable development. Its **vision** is *Flourishing and Resilient Communities* while its **Mission** is to *Promote Social Justice and the Sustainable Development of Communities*.

As a public foundation, KCDF supports poor, marginalized, and disadvantaged communities to initiate and drive their development agenda by harnessing and growing their resources and securing their basic rights and services from duty bearers. The foundation works with organized communities that are focused on sustainably uplifting themselves through asset building. KCDF capitalizes on right-based approaches in supporting social justice and sustainable development.

KCDF has partnered with other East African Civil Society Organizations to create a financial resilience learning and sharing hub that will be delivered through face-to-face and online interactions. The overall objective of this project is to have a financially viable civil society, able to generate, build and manage its resources, to advance its goals. CSOs that enroll in the hub will benefit from coaching and mentorship opportunities as part of experiential learning.

and sustainable development. KCDF works through strategic and carefully selected partnerships in Kenya, both at the national and community level, and strongly believes in the ability of communities to identify and prioritize their needs and with a little external support, pursue their own solutions to these needs. KCDF also recognizes that pro-poor policies are critical to be able to address some of the systemic challenges faced by vulnerable groups, hence the need to push for the development of the necessary policies to support the promotion of a just and fair society, as well as good governance. KCDF is part of the growing #shiftthepower movement that collaboratives seek to support a global shift of power to communities.

2.1.2 Uganda

Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC) is a non-partisan, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting and improving the socio-economic welfare of the most vulnerable individuals, families, and communities in Uganda. As for its vision, UCOBAC envisions empowered communities free of poverty and able to exercise their Human Rights and Fundamental freedoms. Its mission seeks 'To improve the welfare of women and children using community-based initiatives.' UCOBAC seeks to identify and define the needs of vulnerable women and children while strategically developing programs that address priority areas.

2 Case Study Briefs

2.1 Countries and Organisations Covered

Those that provided the case studies were:

2.1.1 Kenya

The Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) was founded in 1997 as an indigenous southern-based, lead, and community-rooted organization. Since its establishment in, Kenya, the foundation has built a strong basis for community-driven development approaches and is unique in Kenya as a pioneer of community philanthropy

2.2 Case Study Overview

Case Study 1: A Tale of Good Governance: The KCDF Story: Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF). KCDF is respected and seen as being credible, accountable, and transparent, amongst its peers as well as donors and the government. KCDF has innovated and developed an effective governance structure over the years. When it started, no other organisations were operating in the space it wanted to work in. There were no models it would learn from and adopt. It has therefore developed its governance structure through creativity, innovation, trial and error. The result has been a highly developed and effective governance structure that has guided the organisation to its current success. Despite its status and success, KCDF is not resting on its laurels – rather it continues to appreciate that its achievements are a work in progress and more needs to be done to further develop and improve its governance structures.

Case Study 2: Governance from the Grassroots: Uganda Community-Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC).

UCOBAC's governance structure is solidly grounded in the communities in which is domiciled. It has stayed true to its grassroots origins where it emerged as a group of women united and driven by the passion to protect children during the Ugandan civil war. Its activities are grounded, driven, and run by communities. Unlike many organisations where communities are simply beneficiaries and sometimes

treated as passengers on the development train, those with UCOBAC, is an intrinsic and critical part of the organisation. UCOBAC is therefore a rare example of an NGO where the community forms the governance structure rather than the common practice where they are added on to spice the Board. Its continuing endurance and sustainability, even when it has lacked funding, demonstrates the reliance that true community ownership can bring. It offers other CSO alternative ideas to governance.



A Tale of Good Governance: The KCDF Story

Executive Summary

The Kenya Community Development Foundation (KCDF) was founded in 1997 as an indigenous southern-based, lead, and community-rooted organization. Since its establishment in Kenya, the foundation has built a strong basis for community-driven development approaches and is unique in Kenya as a pioneer of community philanthropy and sustainable development. Its vision is Flourishing and Resilient Communities while its Mission is 'To Promote Social Justice and the Sustainable Development of Communities'. KCDF works with both national and community-based organizations to shift the power to communities, enable prosperity, strengthen a culture of working together, and enable communities to hold decision-makers accountable.

KCDF is respected and seen as being credible, accountable, and transparent, amongst its peers as well as donors and the government. KCDF has innovated and developed an effective governance structure over the years. When it started, no other organisations were operating in the space it wanted to work in. There were no models it would learn from and adopt. It has therefore developed its governance structure through creativity, innovation, trial, and error. The result has been a highly developed and effective governance structure that has guided the organisation to its current success. Despite its status and success, KCDF is not resting on its laurels – rather it continues to appreciate that its achievements are a work in progress and more needs to be done to further develop and improve its governance structures.

The KCDF Foundation Board governs the foundation. Though it has a provision of 13 members, only nine of its seats are currently occupied. Board members can serve up to a maximum of two terms of 3 years each or 6 years in total. The KCDF board enjoys beauty in its diversity – combining industry and development experts. The Board consists of subject leaders, private sector experts as well as philanthropists. Care is taken to put together a Board, which can work together by paying attention to the emotional intelligence of members. The board members lend their networks and contacts to the foundation enabling it to mobilise funds as well as allowing it better implement its vision and mission.

KCDF Trust is responsible for all the assets owned by the foundation. This includes the endowment funds as well as physical assets such as the KCDF House and the land in Lamu. Unlike the Foundation, which is registered as a company limited by guarantee without share capital, the Trust registration ensures

the perpetuity of ownership. Most of the trustees serve for one or two years. Some of the Trustees are recruited from retired members of the KCDF Board with the others being head hunted for their expertise and leadership skills. The Executive Director also sits on the KCDF Trust Board as the Secretary.

The foundation has registered ADAPO Holdings to help it diversify its investments outside the money market. ADAPO Holdings can invest in land and property. The company seeks to introduce private sector standards in the development sector. The foundation provides secretariat services to KCDF Trust and ADAPO Holdings, which currently have no staff of their own.

The governance structure provides KCDF with several benefits. These include credibility, accountability, and transparency, which in turn increase its appeal to donors. The structure enables KCDF to target the different kinds of expertise it needs to serve in the various spaces that it has created. KCDF can identify, recruit and capitalize on a large pool of top talent, expertise, and experiences that it cannot afford to pay for. These services are provided pro bono by the various Board members and Trustees.

The governance increases the effectiveness of the organisation given that each structure has clear roles that enable greater specialization. The various structures provide KCDF the opportunity to recruit people with diverse backgrounds and networks. The network is an important asset in securing resources and services.

There are several challenges faced by the KCDF regarding the existing governance structures. Given that, there are several governance structures involved, maintaining control over the other arms becomes a challenge for the foundation. Decision-making can drag in some instances where a decision involves several structures. It can also be costly maintaining an organisation set up with several governance structures! Relationship building between the various entities is critical -- each of them has to co-exist and appreciate each other's roles, values and expertise. In addition, it is difficult identifying and recruiting the right people to serve within the Foundation and Trust. Furthermore, it is challenging to ensure that these people often at the top of their game, work together as a team.

KCDF's future plans entail introducing Board appraisals in line with best practices. KCDF also plans to staff ADAPO Holdings in the near future to

strengthen its depth of expertise. This is important, especially in managing its growing investment portfolio in an increasingly challenging environment. KCDF has learned several lessons over the years.

These include the need to ensure that there is a thread running throughout all the entities. The structures need to support each other rather than compete. Any significant disagreements between them can be costly. The powers between the various structures, therefore, need to be clearly defined. If not, they may interfere with each other's mandates.

The powers of the Trust and Foundation were not well defined in the beginning, and this affected funding from the Trust to the foundation. KCDF learned from this and clarified these powers thus making it easier for the foundation to access funding from its endowment fund.

1 Introduction

As a public foundation, KCDF supports poor, marginalized, and disadvantaged communities to initiate and drive their development agenda by harnessing and growing their resources and securing their basic rights and services from duty bearers. The foundation works with organized communities that are focused on sustainably uplifting themselves through asset building. KCDF capitalizes on right-based approaches in supporting social justice and sustainable development. The foundation recognizes that pro-poor policies are critical to be able to address some of the systemic challenges faced by vulnerable groups, hence the need to push for the development of the necessary policies to support the promotion of a just and fair society, as well as good governance.

KCDF works throughout the country with both national and community-based organizations to shift the power to communities, enable prosperity, strengthen the culture of working together, and enable communities to hold decision-makers accountable. Its approach to sustainable development is anchored on ensuring communities can identify and act on their most pressing needs by paying attention to the immediate and long-term challenges and crafting innovative and home-grown solutions focused in the areas of livelihoods, education, environmental conservation, and policy influencing.

KCDF's key thematic areas cover education; livelihood; environment and natural resource management; effective governance; and enhancing institutional effectiveness. Headquartered in Nairobi,

Kenya, KCDF works across the 47 counties in Kenya and significantly in 32 of them through partnerships with like-minded grassroots organizations/ Civil Society Actors. Currently, KCDF has over 60 active partnerships (grantees) implementing projects in Livelihoods, Environmental conservation, education, governance and social accountability. The foundation's core values are equity, respect, integrity, collaboration, and innovation.

To effectively achieve its mission, KCDF applies the following approaches to its work;

- **Community Engagement and Organizing:** The KCDF model of delivering its mandate is through working with organized community groups, associations, etc., as vehicles to scale up desired changes in targeted communities.
- **Local Philanthropy:** KCDF works to encourage the growth and promotion of organized giving for sustainable development in Kenya. The goal is to move communities and the wider Kenyan public from a mindset of depending on external resources to the effective mobilization of in-country resources towards the implementation of their prioritized projects.
- **Institution Building:** KCDF's concept of sustainable community-driven development is pegged on the premise that well-capacitated groups are key instruments in scaling up and sustaining continuous transformative change at the grassroots levels.
- **Partnerships and Networking:** KCDF believes that the challenges of poverty cannot be achieved by one actor hence there is value in working collaboratively with other like-minded organizations in addressing issues that communities continue to face.
- **Policy Influencing:** Policy influencing refers to the different actions taken by organized groups on an issue of concern, to influence decision-making or to change a policy that brings about lasting change in the lives of disadvantaged people.
- **Asset Development:** This refers to work by non-profits of building long-term assets of different kinds, aimed at generating flexible funds to further their collective goals to obviate their work being affected when funders change their priorities.

2 Good Governance - The KCDF Way

2.1 KCDF Governance

KCDF has several structures that support its operations. These include:

- KCDF Foundation Board
- KCDF Trustees
- ADAPO Holdings Board

2.1.1 KCDF Foundation Board

The KCDF Foundation Board governs the foundation. Though it has a provision of 13 members, only nine of the positions are occupied. Board members can serve up to a maximum of 2 terms of 3 years each or 6 years in total.

Board recruitment is done through a variety of strategies. These include:

- Recommendations
- Board recruitment companies

The KCDF board enjoys beauty in its diversity. It combines industry and development experts. The KCDF Foundation board consists of subject leaders, private sector experts as well as philanthropists. Care is taken to put together a board, which can work together which requires paying attention to the emotional intelligence of potential members. The board members lend their networks and contacts to the foundation enabling it to mobilise funds as well as better implement its vision and mission.

As part of their responsibilities, board members are meant to mobilise resources for KCDF. As a practice, they also contribute to KCDF with amounts ranging from Ksh 100,000 to Ksh 300,000. However, amounts of up to Ksh 1 million have been received from single members.

2.1.2 KCDF Trust

KCDF Trust is responsible for all the assets owned by the foundation. This includes the endowment funds as well as physical assets such as the KCDF House and the land in Lamu. Most of the trustees serve for one or two

years. Some of them are recruited from retired members of the KCDF Board amongst others. For example, the last two Board chairs have ended up joining the KCDF Trust. It is not an automatic practice and depends on the value they can offer the trust as well as their KCDF Board performance. The Executive Director also sits on the KCDF Trust Board as the Secretary.

The assets are under the custody of KCDF Trust. Unlike the Foundation, which is registered as a company limited by guarantee without share capital, the Trust registration ensures the perpetuity of ownership.

The objectives of the Trust are:

- Ensure that the Trust has an appropriate legal framework to discharge its role as holder and custodian of the KCDF assets.
- In addition to its role as holder and custodian, ensure that the Trust has the optimal legal and administrative framework to enable it to protect, grow and nurture the assets in its custody.
- Ensure that the Trust has a stable foundation and infrastructure to efficiently oversee and manage the assets in its custody.
- To provide a platform that will enable the Trust to handle a variety of investments and assets so that it can support the wider KCDF family's growth and expansion objectives.

To ensure accountability and transparency, two trustees must sign before any transfer is done. This serves to protect the assets of the Trust from any potential mischief.

2.1.3 ADAPO Holding

The foundation has registered ADAPO Holdings to help it diversify its investments outside the money market. ADAPO is a holding company for assets (except the endowment fund) for the KCDF Trust. It advises KCDF Trust to invest in land and property in line with its mandate.

ADAPO Holding has a board comprised of:

Board Membership	
Source	Number
KCDF Trust Representatives	2
KCDF Foundation Representatives	2
Independent	2
KCDF Executive Director	1
Total	7

The foundation provides secretariat services to KCDF Trust and ADAPO Holdings. ADAPO currently has no staff of its own.

2.2 Benefits

The governance structure provides KCDF with several benefits.

Credibility: The Board has strengthened the KCDF's credibility and appeal to donors. The Board is composed of reputable, respectable, and credible individuals who are respected in their own spaces. Their combined presence on the KCDF Board adds to its credibility.

Accountability and Transparency: The governance structure increases transparency and accountability as far as governance is concerned. This is because roles and responsibilities are spread amongst several structures. These are spelled out in various governance documents.

Expertise: The structure enables KCDF to target the different kinds of expertise it needs. The Trust, for example, requires more expertise in investments while the foundation needs more development-oriented experience. The Trust, therefore, has more business-oriented people than the Foundation. KCDF can identify, recruit and capitalize on a large pool of top talent, expertise and experiences that it cannot afford to pay for. These services are provided pro bono in line with its governance policies.

Effectiveness: The governance structure increases the effectiveness of the organisation given that each structure has clear roles that enable greater specialization. KCDF has over time developed each governance structure to serve a particular purpose. While the KCDF Foundation Board is more concerned with development issues, the KCDF Trust, Trustees are more investment focused. This specialization makes the various structures more effective.

Networks: The various structures provide KCDF the opportunity to recruit people with diverse

backgrounds and networks. The networks are an important asset in securing resources and services.

2.3 Challenges

There are several challenges faced by the KCDF regarding the existing governance structures.

Control: Given that, there are several governance structures involved, maintaining control over all the arms becomes a challenge for the foundation. The different structures need to work in tandem if the organisation is to be effectively governed and this is not always easy.

Decision Making: This can drag on where a decision involves several structures. Each of them has their own meeting schedules and decision-making styles. Contentious issues will need more time to deliberate and this can be time-consuming.

Costs: The greater number of structures demand higher costs to support them. Even though the members serve on a pro-bono basis, there are still costs involved in facilitating physical meetings. The costs are more manageable however when meetings occur online.

Models: There were no organisations with models that KCDF could learn from at its inception. It has therefore had to innovate and develop structures that respond to existing and emerging needs. KCDF has learned from its experiences, both positive and negative and developed tailored organisation structures. In so doing, it has become a trailblazer in its work.

Demands High levels of accountability: All structures have to demonstrate accountability which is not only important due to their tax obligations but also to attract the right people to serve. The existence of various structures helps put pressure on all of them to be accountable to each other.

Relationship building between the various entities: All of the governance structures have to co-exist and appreciate each other's roles, values and expertise. Building the relationships between these different structures is challenging and takes time.

Finding the right people: It is difficult identifying and recruiting the right people to serve within the Foundation and Trust. Furthermore, it is challenging to ensure that these people, often at the top of their game, will work together as a team. It has an element of gambling to ensure that those recruited can fit in and contribute to the team and KCDF.

2.4 Future Plans

KCDF has several plans. These include:

Board Appraisals: KCDF is introducing Board appraisals to further strengthen its good practices. Board appraisals have become good practice and KCDF intends to conduct them on an annual basis.

ADAPO Holding: KCDF plans to staff ADAPO Holdings in the near future to strengthen its depth of expertise. This is important especially in managing its growing investment portfolio, especially in a volatile local and global environment.

3 Lessons Learned

KCDF has learned several lessons over the years. These include:

Differences of Opinion: The governance structures bring together groups of people with diverse backgrounds, ideas, thoughts, and experiences. While this has many benefits, it also exposes the organisation to significant differences of opinion. These have to be properly managed if the organisation is to operate optimally.

Coordination: There is a need to ensure that there is a thread running throughout all the entities. The structures need to support each other rather than compete. Any significant disagreements between them can be costly. It is important to ensure that they understand that they are part of the wider KCDF family and need to work together for the good of KCDF.

Having Well-Defined Powers: The powers between the various structures need to be clearly defined. If not, they may interfere with each other's mandates. The powers of the Trust and Foundation were not well defined in the beginning and this affected funding from the Trust to the foundation. KCDF learned from this and clarified these powers making it easier for the foundation to access funding from its endowment fund.

Establish Separate Governance Structures: In the beginning, all members of the KCDF Foundation served as Trustees of the KCDF Trust. This muddled accountability between the two structures. It also failed to appreciate the different skill sets required for each governance structure. With time, this was reduced to two Board members from the foundation along with the Executive Director. The rest are

headhunted and competitively recruited based on their expertise, reputation, and credibility.

4 Conclusion

4.1 Conclusions

KCDF has innovated and developed an effective governance structure over the years. When it started, no other organisations were operating in the space it wanted to work in. There were no models it could learn from and adopt. It has therefore developed its governance structure through creativity, innovation, trial, and error. The result has been a highly tailored governance structure that has effectively guided the organisation to its current level of success.

KCDF is respected and seen as being credible, accountable, and transparent amongst its peers as well as donors and the government. Despite its status and success, it is not resting on its laurels – rather it continues to appreciate that its achievements are a work in progress and more needs to be done to further develop and improve its governance structures.

4.2 Replication Steps

There are several things to keep in mind when developing governance structures:

Step 1: Understand the organisation and what it intends to do. This is critical in developing the right structures for it.

Step 2: Identify clear mandates and roles for each governance structure. This reduces the number of potential conflicts. It also enables the organisation to identify the kind of expertise that it needs for each structure.

Step 3: Create links between them: Remember they are part of the same organisation family. The structures need to cooperate rather than compete if the organisation is to prosper.

Step 4: Recruit the right people: Be clear on the kind of people you need. Take your time in recruiting the right team. Advertise, headhunt, and do due diligence. Ensure that their emotional intelligence makes them compatible.

Step 5: Keep learning and improving: You will not get it right the first time. You have to keep on working and improving your governance structures.



Governance from the Grassroots

Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC)

Executive Summary

Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC) is a non-partisan, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting and improving the socio-economic welfare of the most vulnerable individuals, families and communities in Uganda. For its vision, 'UCOBAC envisions empowered communities free of poverty and able to exercise their Human Rights and Fundamental freedoms'. The organisation currently operates in 11 districts of Uganda, including Kampala, Mityana, Mubende, Bugiri, Hoima, Kyankwanzi, Pader, Butaleja and Lamwo.

UCOBAC is a membership organisation with an organisational structure that comprises the National General Assembly, National Executive Committee, National Secretariat and District Affiliates. The UCOBAC model enables communities to participate in governance and drive their development projects. The throwback on its structure is that it is very expensive to maintain. Furthermore, donors are unwilling to support governance costs despite their frequent demands for good governance.

Its strong community structures have been one of UCOBAC's strengths. It ensures that the organisation is well grounded in the community, which has also increased its appeal to donors and partners. UCOBAC has been able to survive without donor funding in the past partly because of its strong community grounding and support. It also generates some revenues from the rental of property in Kampala putting it on the road to sustainability.

UCOBAC has learned many lessons over the years, both from its successes as well as mistakes. One is that facilitative organisation culture is important in supporting good governance. Furthermore, it is important to mentor new Board members to increase their effectiveness. It has also been learned that board retreats, well used, are a useful tool in the orientation of new board members. Lastly, communities are the strength of any organisation that is serious about sustainable development. Community members can be just as effective as anyone else in driving and running development initiatives.

UCOBAC is therefore a rare example of an NGO where the community forms the governance structure rather than the common practice where they are added on to spice the Board. Its continuing endurance and sustainability, even when it has lacked funding, demonstrates the resilience that true community ownership can bring.

1 Introduction

Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare (UCOBAC) is a non-partisan, non-governmental organization dedicated to promoting and improving the socio-economic welfare of the most vulnerable individuals, families and communities in Uganda. UCOBAC seeks to identify and define the needs of vulnerable women and children while strategically developing programs that address priority areas. As for its vision, UCOBAC envisions empowered communities free of poverty and able to exercise their Human Rights and Fundamental freedoms. Its mission seeks 'To improve the welfare of women and children using community-based initiatives.'

Core values

- Honesty
- Excellence
- Integrity
- Volunteerism
- Transparency
- Accountability

Objectives

UCOBAC's objectives are:

- To identify and define vulnerable women and children, their needs and priority programs.
- To advocate for women's and children's rights.
- To plan, design and implement programs to promote women's and children's welfare.
- To enable the local communities to acquire and sustain the capacity to plan, obtain and manage resources that will improve the welfare of women and children.
- To strengthen the capacity of Community-Based Organizations (CBOs) to meet their objectives in improving the welfare of women and children.

Program Areas

UCOBAC currently operates in 11 districts of Uganda, namely; Kampala, Mityana, Mubende, Bugiri, Hoima, Kyankwanzi, Pader, Butaleja and Lamwo. Its programs cover:

- Orphans and other Vulnerable Children (OVC)
- Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR) and Gender Based Violence (GBV)
- Women's Land and Property Rights (WLPR)
- Food Security, Livelihoods and Climate Change Resilience (FLCCR)

2 Governance from the Grassroots: The UCOBAC Experience

2.1 UCOBAC Governance

UCOBAC's history can be traced back to 1984 when a group of grassroots women came together to support children. It was during the war in Uganda and the women were concerned about the impact the war, especially in Luwero Triangle, was having on children. The traditional extended system was collapsing leaving children vulnerable. At the time, it was only UNICEF that was actively working with children and no local organisations were doing so. The women later organized themselves as a community-based organization (CBO) which received some support from UNICEF. As it implemented its programs, it became evident that it needed mothers and women to support programs touching on children. This led to the inclusion of women in programs. UCOBAC was eventually registered as an NGO in 1990. When UNICEF pulled out of direct project implementation in Uganda and UCOBAC moved to fill this space.

UCOBAC's offices are headquartered in Kampala but have two regional offices. Regarding geographical coverage, it one time worked in 30 districts but it later scaled this down to 20 and then 11 districts due to funding constraints. UCOBAC also appreciated that it was spread too thin on the ground and needed to rationalize. The large geographical coverage was reducing its impact.

Membership

Membership is open to all individuals who subscribe to the aims and objectives of the organization without prejudice on race, sex, religion, class, or political opinions.

Categories of membership include:

- National NGO's
- Community-Based Organizations (CBOs)
- Individual or volunteers
- UCOBAC beneficiaries

The membership benefits are the same as any other membership-based organisation and include:

- Attendance and participation in the General Assembly.
- The right to vote and be voted to the Board of Directors.

- Opportunities to serve on UCOBAC Sub-committees.
- Unlimited access to the information at UCOBAC Resource Centre at the Secretariat.
- Opportunity to serve vulnerable women and children.

The membership is approved by UCOBAC Management Committee. Once approved, members are expected to embrace UCOBAC's vision, mission, objectives and values. This also entails abiding by the UCOBAC constitution. Furthermore, they are expected to participate in ongoing organizational activities. This is a key requirement of UCOBAC given its management and governance model. Members have the role of representing UCOBAC in the larger community and representing its views in various constituencies.

The annual membership fees vary depending on the category of membership and are captured below:

Category	Membership Fee (UGX)
National NGOs	UGX 100,000/=
CBOs	UGX 50,000/=
Individuals	UGX 30,000/=
Volunteer	UGX 20,000/=
UCOBAC beneficiary	UGX 10,000/=

2.2 How it Works

UCOBAC is a membership organisation with an organisational structure that comprises the National General Assembly, National Executive Committee, National Secretariat and District Affiliates.

Communities: UCOBAC's foundation stems from the communities that it serves. UCOBAC works with women to enhance a child, family and community's livelihood. UCOBAC's strength has remained in women, children, and communities. Its activities are based in, driven by and run by communities.

Community-Based Organisations: The various social and economic challenges have driven both men and women to organize themselves into small self-help groups or CBOs to meet their needs. UCOBAC works with both formal and informal CBOs to create sustainable social change. The organisation works with different types of community organisations including CBOs, self-help groups, Village Savings and Loan Associations (VLSAs), and grassroots organisations amongst others that are both registered and unregistered. When joining UCOBAC, the groups register free of charge. These groups hold

a mini-A AGM in their districts where they nominate 7-9 organisations as their representatives. They are often the stronger and bigger community groups. It is these representative groups that pay membership fees to UCOBAC on behalf of the rest. The CBOs pay UGX 100,000 per year while the SHGs pay UCX 50,000 annually. This generates about UGX 9 million for UCOBAC annually. The funds are used to support governance activities. Members also support these activities pro bono.

District Affiliates: UCOBAC identifies District Affiliates from its network of member CBOs who volunteer to represent the organization in the respective districts of operation. A team of 7-9 members composes one UCOBAC District Affiliate Committee (DAC). It is these organisations that represent the organisation at AGMs every 4 years. The team is charged with implementing projects in the districts. This is done with both the grassroots groups as well as volunteers.

The Board: The BOD is the main policy-making organ of UCOBAC. They oversee the activities of the organization and steer it along the most appropriate path of growth. During the AGM, members elect seven representatives for a two-year renewable term. These comprise of:

- Chairman
- Vice Chairman
- Treasurer
- 4 Regional representatives
 - Eastern Uganda
 - Western Uganda
 - Northern Ugandan
 - Southern Uganda
- The Executive Director is the secretary to the Board.

After their two-year term, the Board members decide whether they want to continue or not. If they opt not to, which is rare, they are replaced by their District Affiliates, following a vote. The Board meets quarterly, usually virtually, which helps minimize costs.

Annual General Assembly: The DAC along with other stakeholders of UCOBAC make up the organization's General Assembly (GA). The Board of Directors (BOD) is elected at the general assembly. The District Affiliates attend AGMs every four years. The AGMs are held less frequently given the high costs involved in organising, transport, accommodation and meals. They are not donor supported.

The **National Secretariat** is the main implementing organ of UCOBAC. It plays the role of making the organization's policies a reality through customized

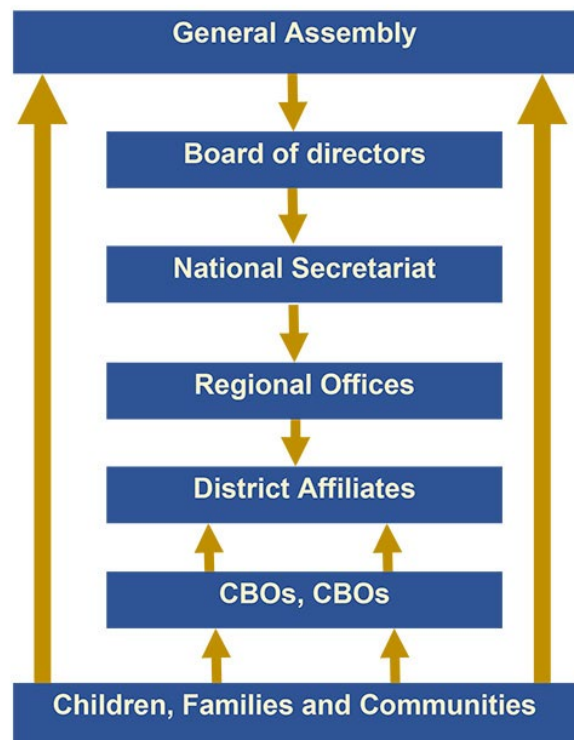
programming. The Secretariat is composed of Head Office staff and Field Based Staff.

This bottom-up approach has since 1990 enabled UCOBAC to effectively solve socio-economic problems while working with communities to empower them to identify their challenges, work on them and meet their needs.



Uganda Community Based Association for Women and Children Welfare

Governance Structure



2.3 Organization Structure

Departments

UCOBAC's strategic focus covers two Departments including the Program Areas Department and Organizational Development Department.

The Program areas Department focuses on the following programs:

- Orphans and other Vulnerable Children
- Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights and Gender-Based Violence
- Women's Land and Property rights
- Food Security, Livelihoods and Climate Change Resilience.

On the other hand, the Organizational Development Department focuses on the following:

- Capacity Building
- Monitoring and Evaluation
- Advocacy, Networking and Communication
- Finance and Administration.

UCOBAC has 30 members of staff, most of whom are women given the focus of its programs. These staff include program staff as well as institutional strengthening staff. Those in programs cover:

- 4 Senior Program Officers
- 12 Project Offices
- 2 Regional Project Officers (Eastern and Western Uganda)
- 4 Field Officers.

The Institutional Strengthening personnel include:

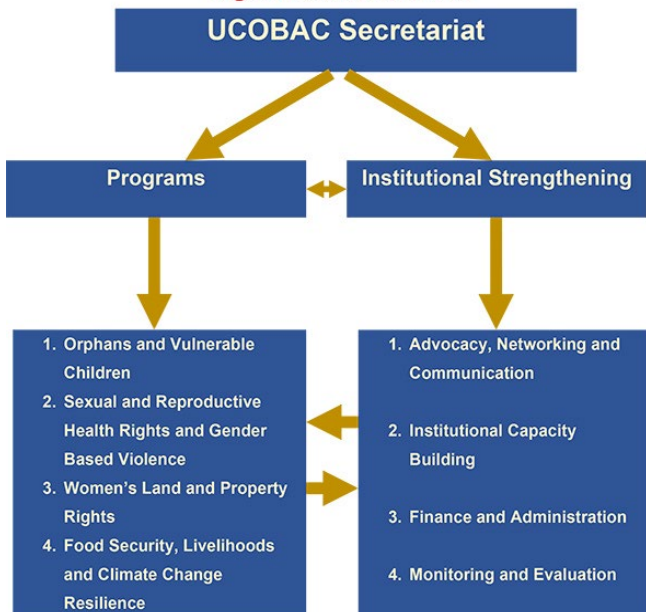
- 1 Monitoring and Evaluation Officer
- 1 Advocacy and Communications Officer
- 1 Finance and Administration officer
- 1 Institutional Capacity Building Officer

UCOBAC maintains a lean and mean structure. Nine staff are based in the Kampala offices including the Executive Director, four Senior Program Officers and the four institutional strengthening staff. The rest are based on regional and field offices. Most of the staff are women based on the nature of their work. It does however work with male champions as well.



**Uganda Community Based Association
for Women and Children Welfare**

Organization Structure



2.4 Achievements

UCOBAC has had several achievements:

Sector Leadership: It is one of Uganda’s leading organisations as far as children and women are concerned. It is respected and consulted by the government, donors, and other peer organisations on women and children issues.

Strong Community Structures: These are important in strengthening relationships and ownership by the community. It is one of UCOBAC’s strengths. It ensures that the organisation is well-grounded in the community.

Community Participation: The UCOBAC model has been effective in enabling communities to participate in governance and drive its development projects. It has put communities at the center of all that it does. This has increased its appeal to partners.

Sustainability: The organisation has been able to survive without donor funding in the past. This is because of its strong community grounding and support. It also generates some revenues from the rental of property in Kampala and is therefore not entirely dependent on donor funding.

Donor Appeal: Donors are attracted to the organisation because of its strong community structures, ownership and participation. It is not seen as a ‘Kampala’ organisation but rather as a grassroots organisation. Its origins and continued presence in the community, regional and field offices help to support this perception.

2.5 Challenges

Despite its achievements, UCOBAC faces several challenges:

Covid-19: The pandemic affected UCOBAC’s operations as an organization as it could not continue to run its programs with communities during the period. Funding partners minimized expenditure as one of the coping mechanisms to handle the effects of the pandemic in their own countries. This constrained UCOBAC’s resources and forced it to scale down its activities further.

Governance costs: It’s very expensive to operate governance structures, especially those that cascade to the grassroots as in the case of UCOBAC. Good governance, especially one that involves communities is expensive. It is however worth the cost at the end of the day as it supports greater transparency and accountability leading to increased credibility and trust in the organization by various stakeholders.

Donor Reluctance: Donors are unwilling to fund

governance structures and activities. Though they often demand good governance, few donors are willing to support the organization in covering the resultant costs. This has forced UCOBAC to cover these costs from the income that it earns.

3 Lessons Learned

Mentorship in capacity building: Good governance does not happen by itself. Board members have to be capacitated to enable them effectively fulfill their mandate. One way of doing this is through mentoring new members so that they are more effective in governing the organisation. This is even more important for those who are inexperienced in Board management.

Board Retreats as a governance tool: Retreats are important in the orientation of new board members. Board retreats are a great tool for getting Board members to gel and work as a team. It enables them to discuss critical issues relevant to the organisation without the rush and time constraints that influence a normal Board meeting. Their downside is the cost of transporting and accommodating board members especially when donors are unwilling to cover the costs.

Respect as a core value: Board members need to be respected irrespective of their station in life. This is particularly more important for those from communities with humble backgrounds or who may not have been highly educated or display material success. One of UCOBAC's values is respect. It is important for all Board members to be respected not only by their colleagues but also members of staff. This makes them more effective not only in representing the voices of communities on the ground but also in discharging their mandate.

Good governance is influenced by organisation structure and culture: A facilitative organisation culture is important in supporting good governance. These are based on values. UCOBAC has made great efforts over the years to develop structures and a work culture that supports good governance. It has checks and balances that ensure that the organisation stays true to its values.

Do not bite more than you can chew: It is important not to spread yourself too thin. This reduces your effectiveness and impact. UCOBAC was once present in 30 districts in Uganda and this not only required huge resource outlays to maintain but also

undermined its impact. It is not present in 11 districts where it is more effective as well as more sustainable.

Communities are the true strength of sustainable organisations: Communities are the strength of any organisation that is serious about sustainable development. UCOBAC began as a group of women in the grassroots out to protect vulnerable children during the war in the 1980s. Despite its growth and success, it has remained true to its roots as a community organisation. Its name, structure and management processes reflect the importance of the community in the organisation. Communities still play a central role in the implementation of the organisation's activities and make the organisation a force to reckon with at the grassroots of districts in which it has a presence.

Communities are willing to give to organisations in which they have a stake: Communities are willing to give to support development activities. This can be both in-kind and cash. While some may seem to be poor and even vulnerable, UCOBAC has benefitted from the resources of its communities. These resources have helped the organisation navigate and survive tough times when it had no donor funding. While it appreciates donors' funds, UCOBAC has always treasured the support of its communities as it considers it key to its sustainability.

Project Management: Communities can be effective in driving and running activities. In UCOBAC, communities occupy the driving seat as far as governance is concerned. They play a critical role in the design, implementation and management of projects, especially through the district affiliates. While UCOBAC also has staff involved in implementation, they support rather than control project implementation. This approach has served to increase the sustainability of the activities that it initiates and implements.

4 Conclusion

4.1 Conclusion

UCOBAC's governance structure is solidly grounded in the communities in which it is domiciled. It has stayed true to its grassroots origins where it emerged as a group of women united and driven by the passion to protect children during the Ugandan civil war. Its activities are grounded, driven and run by communities. Unlike many organisations where communities are simply beneficiaries and sometimes

treated as passengers on the development train, those with UCOBAC, is an intrinsic and critical part of the organisation.

Communities are also at the central part of the governance structure. Community groupings, be they CBOs, SHGs, VSLA amongst others, registered and unregistered, identify those that will represent them at the District Affiliates level. This is to the recognition that they are too many to be members of UCOBAC. It is these representatives that then pay the membership fees of UGX 50,000 – 100,000. They elect those that will represent them on the district level through their Mini-AGMs held biennially. These officials, supported by volunteers are crucial in the management, supervision and implementation of project activities in the district. They also play an important role in electing the national Board Officials during the AGM held every 4 years. The Board itself has representatives from the Northern, Southern, Western and Eastern Regions of Uganda ensuring that the voice of the community resonates throughout the entire governance structure. When there is a vacancy, it is the same regions that elect a replacement, rather than the Board. The governance structure is by the community and for the community.

UCOBAC is therefore a rare example of an NGO where the community forms the governance structure rather than the common practice where they are added on to spice the Board. Its continuing endurance and sustainability, even when it has lacked funding, demonstrates the reliance that true community ownership can bring.

4.2 Replication Steps

Step 1: Start from the community. The community must be part and parcel of the structure right from inception. The organisation must listen to them and respond to their needs if it is to genuinely earn their support.

Step 2: Develop Appropriate Structures: The governance structure must provide for effective community participation. Good governance does not happen by itself.

Step 3: Develop supporting policies. These must be realistic. For example, do not have annual general meetings if the resources cannot support this. In the case of UCOBAC, a 4-year meeting cycle is more affordable within their resource base.

Step 4: Put Communities in the driving seat. Ensure communities develop, drive and manage initiatives. This creates greater ownership. Tapping into and leveraging community expertise increases the sustainability of initiatives.

Step 5: Invest in good governance: Use retreats and mentorship to ensure that Board members can effectively discharge their roles. Given that Boards in membership organisations are elected for various reasons, which or may not include expertise, developing their capacity to govern is critical to effective governance.

Step 6: Ride Technology. Capitalise on technologies like Zoom, Team and Google Meet. Virtual meetings are effective not only in ensuring that the governance process works, but that it does so cost-effectively. The virtual meetings have been a blessing for UCOBAC as they have helped it substantially reduce the cost of its governance while increasing participation in meetings.

Strength of a Woman

Hon. Maxensia Nakibuuka Takirambule, or better known as Max, talks with great passion, energy and conviction. From the surface, you would think that life has been a bed of roses. If this is the case, then it has been made with the thorns rather than the flowers. She has experienced more pain than many have in a lifetime but stoically marched one. If there is a meaning to the popular proverb about making lemonade from lemons, then Max has made tonnes of it. To say that she has been an inspiration to many would be an understatement.

Born into a larger family of 13 children in Butende, in Masaka District, Uganda in 1966, her parents called her Maxensia Nakibuuka. She was the last born and welcomed into a family that had already buried three of her siblings. Many others died in her youth including the brothers and sister who educated her. She has witnessed the death of many of her loved ones over her life, some of whom she cared for when they were ailing and died in her arms. Only three of her siblings are still alive today.

In 1981 to 1984, Max went to Kampala for her secondary education, joining the old Kampala S.S.S with the support of her brothers and sister. From 1985-1987, she joined the College of Business Studies and did a secretarial course, gaining a certificate of business administration. Max proceeded to further her education with a Diploma in Accounting from the Association of Professional Accountants in 1991. She then went on to do a computer course at the Uganda Cooperative Alliance. Tragically, she lost her brother who was paying her fees in 1989 before she graduated from the course. Despite her young age, she already had family to look after. Max had to start caring after her brothers five sons. Her mother was ailing in the village and had to be supported. Max also had to help her three sisters' seven children who were living in her mother's house. She would pay school fees, buy them books and help with incidentals.

While studying, she had to work part time to support her siblings, parents and their kids. Fortunately, it was easy for her to get work in the 1990s. 'One could easily get jobs like typist based on merit in the 1980s and 1990s'. 'If I worked in the morning, I could study in the afternoon'. This enabled her shoulder the enormous responsibility on her shoulders. 'I earned UGX 700 from my first job. It was good money then and I could help my siblings, eat, buy Vaseline and even plait my hair'. She was earning UGX 1,500 in the mid-1990s, which was a fair salary then.

In 1993, Max was married and in 1994 moved to the suburbs of Kampala where they built a home with her late husband. She moved into the home with her four nephews whom she was still supporting and continued to support her sisters 7 children as well as her parents. This eventually created some problems with her husband who was not working. He contracted HIV and Aids in 1998, was often violent before succumbing to the disease in 1999. Max had to support her family with the UGX 500,000 that she earned. Unfortunately, she also tested positive in 1998 turning her life upside down. Max lost her job, suffered stigma, discrimination and violence. It was a difficult time for her but she received support and counselling from community members, including old women and widows and her church groups. "They would encourage me, tell me things would be okay and bring me food'. It was after this trying period that she tried her hands in politics.

In 2001, Max stood as a counselor and won against the incumbent who was a member of the ruling party. She was elected as an L.III Councillor representing Lungujja Sub Parish at Lubaga Division Council. This was despite the insults that her rivals directed towards her about her HIV and Aids status and impending death. Max was then elected Deputy of the Council unopposed and went on to serve a 5-year term until 2006. During this time, she was also a commissioner in the Buganda Kingdom, which gave her greater access to networks. She used the time to empower people, especially people living with HIV and Aids, and vulnerable women and children. In 2005, Max turned her office at home into a health centre, enabling people to access treatment and counselling. She was also able to mobilise bursaries, scholarships, empowerment programs, vaccinations and other medical services for the vulnerable.

In 2005, Max founded a CBO called Lungujja Community Health Caring Organisation (LUCOHECO) where she still serves as the Executive Director. Started in her home, it provided treatment, care and support for people affected and infected with HIV and Aids and the vulnerable. Home based care was a core activity. Max first heard of UCOBAC when she listened to Mama Solomon speaking at a forum. Her values, vision, mission and passion inspired her. In 2008, she and her colleagues were empowered as Community Development Workers by UCOBAC. They were trained on proposal writing, advocacy, paralegal, community mapping, working with widows and grassroots women amongst other areas. They learned to mobilise resources, map out priorities, report rape, human rights issues and deal with land challenges. They got opportunities to share with their peers, visiting different parts of the country and region. UCOBAC has provided empowerment programs and resources that has helped the LUCOHECO implement its vision and mission. As a member of the District Affiliates, it has been involved in the governance of the UCOBAC representing grassroots women. UCOBAC has been a great resource for LUOHECO and many other CBOs, giving them a platform to advocate and defend the rights of the vulnerable at the grassroots.

Max cannot stop talking about the UCOBAC and the doors that they opened for LUCOHECO. The CBO only began to achieve its full potential when Max joined UCOBAC, initially as an individual and then with LUCOHECO. 'UCOBAC was looking for someone like me with a public profile'. Through UCOBAC, she has graced the podiums of many forums including those organized by the United Nations and World Bank. She has shared the stories of those in the grassroots and advocated for their rights. UCOBAC has empowered them to mobilise resources, advocate, and speak with confidence. LUCOHECO is now well known and has impacted on the lives of more than 50,000 people.

However, tragedy was not done with Max. In 2015, following a boda boda accident, she fell severely ill and was in great pain and bedridden for 4 years. In focusing on her community work, Max often did not eat and rest well and the accident triggered a problem that had been building for some time. Many of those who knew her thought she would die. However, her friends and the community stood by her, with some of them repaying the love and support that she had provided over the years. Others even mobilized funds and sent her to India for treatment. Her illness left her with a disability and she is unable to walk.

Despite everything, Max has grown over the years. She is the HIV Focal Person for Kampala Archdiocese in Uganda, as well as the Director for children, youth and people with disabilities in Buganda Kingdom. Max is the Vice chairperson Home Based Care Alliance in Uganda. She is the country coordinator of the Good Samaritan Consortium and African Empowered Communities-Uganda chapter. She is also a member of the Husirou Commission and Groots international in New York. She appreciates all the training and skills that she got from UCOBAC, which contributed, to who she is today.

When UCOBAC trained her and her colleagues, they did not realise what a treasure they had found. If there is a true example of the strength of a woman, it is Max. Life has turned her into a formidable soldier fighting for the vulnerable especially those infected and affected by HIV and Aids. Max is a leading crusader of UCOBAC in which LUCOHECO is a member. Together, they have given a voice to the voiceless.



Kenya Community Development Foundation
Morningside Office Park, 4th Floor, Ngong Road
PO Box 10501-00100 Nairobi, Kenya
Telephone (+254 020) 3540239/8067440/1/2
Office Cell (+254) 722 168 480/736 449 217
Fax +254 20 806 7440 | Email info@kcdf.or.ke
Website www.kcdf.or.ke