



Uganda Inception Web Seminar Report

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CCRDA
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Canada 

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1 Introduction

Co-organized by myself, Mr. Alemu Tesfaye (based at the Organization for Social Science Research in Eastern and Southern Africa [OSSREA]) and Ms. Anne Osamba (based in Kenya), the seminar was held between 10:10am and 11:30am on Friday 26th February, 2021. This was done on Zoom (Meeting ID: 845 14233894)—due to the ongoing Covid19 situation. In all, a total of twenty-five (25) people (10 of whom were women) participated in the seminar (although a few of these sometimes dropped out due to challenges with internet connectivity). These were drawn from a range of youth organizations in various parts of Uganda, College of Education and External Studies (Makerere University), College of Humanities and Social Sciences (Makerere University), civil society organizations in Uganda and departments of the Ministry of Local Government in Uganda. Dr. Turuphena Mukuna and Mr. Tesfaye, who are based at the OSSREA headquarters in Ethiopia, also attended the seminar.

The seminar opened with a welcome address by me. Therein, I informed the participants that the “Covid19 and the Youth Question in Africa: Impact, Response and Prevention” (COYOQA) project focuses primarily on the participation of youths in the Covid19 response (particularly in demanding and working towards inclusion, good governance and accountability by the departments of government implementing the response). I also explained that the project is multi-country, being implemented by an international consortium and integrates components of innovation, advocacy, research and knowledge dissemination. Thus, it would benefit from the input of senior academics specializing in related fields, social workers, public administrators, youths’ educators, and youths. I told the participants that, as a group, they brought those credentials to the seminar and that the goal of the activity was twofold: 1) to inform the participants about the objectives, processes and methods of the project; and 2) to elicit their views on the project. The ultimate goal, therefore, was to start implementing the project with the participants and/ or with their feedback, especially in view of the fact that some of them have insights drawn from related work. I informed the group that, after my address, Mr. Tesfaye would talk to them about the processes of the project and that Dr. Jerome Ntege would present the background, objectives and methodology of the project.

2 Nature and Processes of the COYOQA Project

Mr. Tesfaye introduced the project as a three-year undertaking under the auspices of the IDRC that is being implemented in Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya by OSSREA, Makerere University, Consortium of Christian Relief and Development Association and OSSREA

Kenya Chapter. Subsequently, he presented the project's activities in three categories: completed, ongoing and planned. In the first category, he said that a project consortium planning webinar, stakeholder analysis webinar, stakeholder mapping and two project inception webinars had been completed. He identified the following activities as scheduled: Project consortium meetings; data collection tools development; training of research teams; baseline studies (which will be conducted online and remotely); national knowledge sharing workshops; training manual development; capacity development webinars; Covid19 Vertically Integrated Social Accountability and Advocacy Framework (COVISAF) framework development; and validation and data collection trainings. Finally, he told the participants that, depending on the amenability of the Covid19 situation, field-based research activities may be implemented during the third year of the project's life cycle. He asked the participants to be ready to participate in the project and invited them to find more information about it and OSSREA from their sites online (i.e. www.ossrea.net, www.youtube.com/user/ossrea and @OSSREA [twitter]).

3 Background, Aims and Methodology of the COYOQA Project

Dr. Ntege recapitulated the Covid19 situation, giving specific attention to government's response and the arising youth question(s). And after presenting this background, he situated the COYOQA project's theory of change in it. Thus, he presented the project as aiming at using participatory applied research that adopts a gender-transformative approach to analyze how youths are transforming the public health and socio-economic landscape created by COVID-19. This aim is pursued through advocating for transparent and accountable responses to the pandemic; bridging the divide between excluded youth and the government; coordinating responses using a data-driven, evidence-based approach; developing governance mechanisms for youth engagement in social accountability and advocacy; and ensuring the four pillars of social accountability (i.e. transparency, participation, response and monitoring). Over all, therefore, the project focuses on economics (i.e. livelihoods, financial conditions); security (i.e. violence and personal safety); governance (i.e. fairness, equality, social justice); the environment (i.e. water and sanitation, natural resources); and society (quality of life, food security, social protection, education, media, religious issues, gender, poor resilience to shocks). He explained that in view of its diverse focus, the project will rely on the COVISAF, which will be implemented using mixed methods research and citizen inclusion approaches.

4 Feedback from the Participants

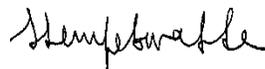
The participants who spoke welcomed the COYOQA project. In particular, they applauded the multifaceted nature of its scope and implementing partners. They also expressed their

readiness to participate in its activities. These participants asked the following questions: 1) Who are youths in the context of the COYOQA project? 2) How are youths and persons with disabilities (PWDs) being involved in the implementation of the project? 3) What arrangements have been made to ensure that the project does more than generate information that might be shelved rather than translated into real contributions to the welfare of the youths? 4) Why is the project being implemented in Kampala, Gulu and Mayuge districts and not any other parts of Uganda? 5) What do participants who are interested in participating in the project's activities need to do to get involved?

In response, the participants were informed that: 1) in the context of the project, youths are defined as young adults and women. 2) The project seeks not only to study the youths but to, initially and primarily, work with and empower them (using the COVISAF) to seek inclusion and accountability in the Covid19 response. Therefore, youths are inherently involved in implementation of the project and impact beyond the generation of knowledge is embedded in the project by design. Efforts will be made to ensure that PWDs are included in the pool of participants. 3) The project is being implemented in Kampala, Gulu and Mayuge districts to represent urban cosmopolitan, urban provincial and rural experiences—attributes that are relevant to the project's aims. In addition, OSSREA has experience and partners in the districts. 4) Some of the participants will be invited as and when activities that they are able to implement come up.

5 Concluding Remarks

Mr. Tesfaye and I told the participants about OSSREA and its work and encouraged those that are not members of the organization to join the Uganda Chapter, which is domiciled in the School of Social Sciences at Makerere University. Thereafter, I thanked them for participating in the webinar and closed it.



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