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# KINGFO ANNUAL REPORT, 2020

PROGRAMME AND MANAGEMENT



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KITGUM NGO FORUM – COMPILED BY THE PROGRAMME  
COORDINATOR

## Table of Contents

<b>FOREWORD</b> .....	2
<b>1.0 INTRODUCTION</b> .....	3
<b>2.0 PLANNED/FUNDED ACTIVITIES</b> .....	3
<b>2.1 HUMAN RIGHTS</b> .....	3
2.1.1 The International Women’s Day – IWD.....	3
2.1.2 Communal Land Rights project – OSF/NUHRP .....	4
<b>2.2 The 2021 general elections</b> .....	5
2.2.1 Election observation .....	6
<b>2.3 CSO COORDINATION PROJECT / GIZ-CUSP</b> .....	6
2.3.1 CSO Coordination meetings .....	6
2.3.2 Virtual meeting to review CSO coordination TOR .....	7
2.3.3 Printing and dissemination of the CSO coordination TOR.....	7
2.3.4 Media campaign (radio talk show and jingles/spots messages).....	8
<b>2.4 GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY</b> .....	8
2.4.1 IG CRETA project .....	8
2.4.2 CMG follow up and engagement with relevant authorities .....	8
2.4.3 The MSH project health social accountability project .....	10
<b>3.0 BOARD RESOLUTIONS</b> .....	10
<b>4.0 EMERGING ACTIVITIES</b> .....	11
4.1 Revival of the DNMC and the SNMC .....	11
4.2 International Republican Institute - IRI training.....	11
4.3 NGO Quality Assurance Mechanism – QuAM meeting .....	11
4.4 DTF engagements .....	12
4.5 Formation of CSO resource mobilization consortium .....	13
<b>5.0 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION</b> .....	13
<b>5.1 Personnel</b> .....	13
<b>5.2 Finances/assets</b> .....	15
<b>5.3 Others</b> .....	15
<b>5.4 Membership</b> .....	16
<b>6.0 ACHIEVEMENTS</b> .....	16
<b>7.0 CHALLENGES</b> .....	17
<b>8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS</b> .....	18

## FOREWORD

The year 2020 was quite a unique and challenging calendar year for the organization, nevertheless the organization also registered a number of successes within the period.

Key among the challenges was the outbreak of the global pandemic COVID 19 in the country which led to a significant scale down in the organization's activities.

Secondly the unceremonious departure of the organization's accountant and the financial losses he caused the organization also put the organization at risk of losing some of its current funding partners. This has been dealt with according to the organization's policies and laws of the country.

However the organization is glad to report that it positively touched people lives through the land conflict mediations it conducted in Mucwini and Omiya Anyima in the course of the year.

In addition to the above the implementation of the IG sponsored CRETA project added value to the implementation of the NUSAF III and DR-DIP sub projects through empowerment of the project beneficiaries and community stakeholders.

The GIZ-CUSP sponsored coordination change project for CSOs witnessed the launch and adoption of a coordination TOR for CSOs in Kitgum and Lamwo district and the launch of several online platforms for CSOs in the two districts. This has tremendously improved CSO coordination and solidarity among CSOs in the districts.

KINGFO looks forward to 2021 with optimism as it continues to build the basic tenets required for the organization to successfully deliver its mandate/mission.

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***Chairperson***

KINGFO, Executive Committee

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report covers the period January to December 2020 which includes an earlier report written for the first half of 2020. We decided to merge the two reports as is the practice in writing a comprehensive annual report every other organization calendar year. The reporting period like the rest of the year was constrained by the COVID 19 virus out break and SOP restrictions. The CV 19 eventuality took a huge toll on the Forum's activity implementation especially those that required gathering of more than ten people. Importantly the Forum had its work abruptly suspended towards the end of March 2020 until June 2020 due to the need for social distancing that followed the COVID 19 restrictions imposed by government.

Nevertheless with the gradual lifting of the lock down measures by the MoH and presidency, the Forum was in position to implement a couple of its core activities. During the period the Forum also reached a number of important milestones which buttressed its programme and institutional capacity for better engagement in the next year. In this report attention is paid to implementation of planned and unplanned activities as well as Board resolutions from the previous BoD meeting. The report also delves into key management areas such as personnel, finance/assets and other critical developments. Finally the report outlines some of the challenges encountered, lessons learnt and recommendations for the next year going forward.

## 2.0 PLANNED/FUNDED ACTIVITIES

### 2.1 HUMAN RIGHTS

#### 2.1.1 The International Women's Day – IWD

The IWD celebration in Kitgum was marked on 8<sup>th</sup> March at Lukwor primary school in, Lukwor parish, Amida Sub County. KINGFO played a key part in mobilizing CSOs to participate in the exercise. The Forum offered a tent and 100 plastic chairs as its contribution towards the celebration. Other CSOs like Meeting Point, Food for the Hungry, Lutheran World Foundation, and NOWUDU among others attended the occasion and supported it in various ways. The KDLG and Amida Sub County LLG played leading roles in marking the IWD 2020 whose theme was *"I'm generation equality; realizing women's rights"*. The event was graced by the National Youth Council Chairperson Mrs. Lillian Aber and the Kitgum woman MP Mrs. Magaret Lamwaka Odwar. KINGFO gave a speech highlighting the agency of women/girls and the renewed relationship between CSOs and Local Government.



*Figure 1 Girl students from various schools like Y.Y. Okot Memorial College in the district participated in the IWD event at Lakwor parish in Amida Sub County.*

### 2.1.2 Communal Land Rights project – OSF/NUHRP

#### *Parliamentary petition feedback meeting*

The feedback meeting convened in January 2020 was attended by a diverse delegation of community members from across the length and breadth of Padwat parish and Palabek sub region. Importantly the meeting was attended by the Clan Chief of Padwat clan, members/leaders of Palbek Community Development Association and representatives of Kitgum NGO Forum. The meeting discussed a number of issues including the delegation’s experience in the delivery of the petition, the interface they had with the speakers of the August houses and the next course of action by the two August houses following the submission of petition. Over eighty participants took part in the meeting.

#### *Mediation of land conflicts*

KINGFO under Northern Uganda Human Rights Partnership – NUHRP engaged in a number of other communal/customary land rights related activities including land conflict mapping and mediation. The partnership approach was to conduct land mediation through the Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanism in collaboration with local cultural and traditional leaders. The land desk recorded/mapped out a number of land disputes within the period including in Mucwini, Omiya Anyima, Akwang, Kitgum

Matidi, Padibe west and Amida sub counties. A number of other land cases were also referred to the land desk for redress. The CV 19 escalated land conflicts in the two districts where some community members got injured or even lost their lives altogether. Two notable land mediations were conducted in Mucwini and Omiya Anyima sub counties with quite positive outcomes.

In Mucwini a land dispute which pitted a nephew against his maternal uncles over about six acres of land threatened to divide the clan and cause violence. We conducted two mediation meetings involving a local religious leader, a local cultural leader, a legal officer from Uganda law society legal aid project and the local authorities. The dispute was amicably settled and the conflicting parties signed a mediation agreement presided over by the legal officer in attendance. The parties together threw a party to celebrate the resolution of the conflict.

In Omiya Anyima Sub County a protracted land dispute between the clans of Akobi and Pajong over a 50 acre grazing land (Olet) had caused disharmony, assaults and arrests. A number of mediators attempted to resolve the dispute in vain. There was also elite interference/incitement by the sons and daughters of the two clans living away in nearby towns and urban centers. The approach adopted by KINGFO and her partners was a blessing in so many ways as it promised to address the matter once and for all. KINGFO conducted two mediation sessions which involved the local land area committee, cultural leaders and technocrats at the sub county level. A good level of consensus was reached and the conflicting parties agreed to lay the issue to rest. The land boundaries were re-demarcated for clarity in the presence of all the stakeholders. However the parties asked to be given some little time before they sign the mediation agreement.

## 2.2 The 2021 general elections

Uganda is scheduled to conduct its Presidential and Parliamentary elections on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2021 and for a host of other elective positions around that time. KINGFO's mandate to promote good governance gives the organization a basis to actively participate in the elections as a third party. The organization particularly took part in providing an opportunity for candidates to interact with the electorates by sponsoring a weekend radio talk show namely '*Lawalla me kuc*' on Peace FM. The talk show attracted Parliamentary and Local Council candidates vying for various elective positions in the 2021 elections. KINGFO with the management of the station agreed to have the programme used for voter education, political analysis, candidate campaigns and joint political debate. The candidates had the opportunity to present their manifestoes to listeners as well as avail themselves to be cross examined by competitors and the voters. KINGFO officer Mr. Mike Owiro and Private Sector – APSEDEC officer Otto Ventorino were a regular fixture the show on behalf of the civil society. This enabled the electorate to make an informed decision as to the most suitable candidate to elect for those positions. The talk shows received commendable reviews and feedback for preparing the masses for the elections.

Secondly KINGFO was involved in voter education via radio talk shows whereby the EC updated voter education handbook 2020 was rolled out to the listeners especially for the voting and polling stages of the election process. Given the restrictions of the CV 19 pandemic and the need to observe the SOPs, voters had the extra burden to familiarize themselves with the new rules. The exercise therefore helped to prepare them to cast their vote in a free and fair environment.

### 2.2.1 Election observation

KINGFO being a good governance promoting organization had to actively participate in the 2021 general elections of Uganda. The organization in partnership with Gulu NGO Forum recruited, trained and deployed 45 short term (40) and Long Term (05) election observers for all the sub counties and constituencies in Kitgum and Lamwo districts. The scope of work of the observer included monitoring the different processes of the elections from nominations, campaigns, polling/voting to result declaration. The observers especially the Long Term ones were also tasked with monitoring post-election events including petitions. The observers used electronic software (ODK) and SMS to relay the information gathered to a central server operated by Citizen Watch – IT (CEW-IT).

However CEW-IT server center was raided by the police on Election Day where their equipment were seized and their personnel detained for at least two days. This caused some delay and disruption in the data transmission and support process which was rectified later on. There was a challenge at the local level as well, the district EC offices had been delegated the responsibility to accredit local observers but failed to do their job despite the applicant (KINGFO) filing all the relevant application documents for its proposed observers. Their action was regarded by KINGFO as malicious and deliberate to frustrate the organization's good intentions to ensure a free and fair elections. The observation continued into 2021 when most of the polling took place.

## 2.3 CSO COORDINATION PROJECT / GIZ-CUSP

This was probably the busiest department in the reporting period as the lifting of the lockdown gave the project some lease of life. A number of activities were implemented within just a space of one month given that the project was meant end by 30<sup>th</sup> September. The activities implemented included the following described below;

### 2.3.1 CSO Coordination meetings

KINGFO was in position to implement two funded CSO coordination meetings in September and November with support from the EU and German government under the GIZ Civil Society in Uganda Support Programme - CUSP. The two meetings attracted about 50 CSO representatives from Kitgum and Lamwo. The meetings provided an opportunity to test the viability of the newly developed and adopted CSO coordination TOR. The two important sessions of the meeting i.e. Sector Working Group – SWGs and plenary sessions were conducted. The SWG sessions explored and identified sector specific issues and forwarded them for further discussions in the plenary sessions. The issues that emerged prominently were the school reopening following the CV 19 lockdown, the poor state of health services, the 2021 elections and potential for Human Rights abuses/violations, the poor state of district/feeder roads because of the heavy rains, and the frequent HEP outage among others. The SWGs were advised to continue having their meetings in between the monthly coordination meeting to further refine their issues and develop corresponding advocacy strategies.



*Figure 2 This was during one of the CSO coordination meetings conducted at ACET Resource center in Kitgum Town*

### 2.3.2 Virtual meeting to review CSO coordination TOR

The GIZ-CUSP Gulu hub technical advisor on governance/the CSO to CSO coordination project initiated an online meeting to look into the final draft version of the TOR whose development started back in 2019. The meeting took place in April 2020 and was attended by Robert and Charity from KINGFO and Paul and Friederike from GIZ-CUSP. The meeting discussed comments from the GIZ team and resolved to undertake a number of actions including; implementing the TOR approval and thematic subcommittee selection meeting; and agreeing on the training topics for the thematic subcommittee capacity building. The meeting resolved to divide the training topics between GIZ and KINGFO team for further research, development and eventual delivery.

### 2.3.3 Printing and dissemination of the CSO coordination TOR

Following an earlier meeting in which the TOR was launched and adopted additional effort was made by the secretariat with support from CUSP to print, publish and disseminate the CSO coordination TOR to key stakeholders. 65 copies of the TOR were produced. The TOR was shared with CSOs, the CUSP team and relevant district offices for their engagement in the CSO coordination process.

### 2.3.4 Media campaign (radio talk show and jingles/spots messages)

As part of the effort to mobilize CSOs the coordination Change Project employed a media campaign strategy through radio talk show and spot messages. The subject of the talk shows/jingles included encouraging CSOs to participate in the monthly coordination meeting, CSO compliance with relevant statutory provisions/regulatory frameworks, and voter education given the political season in Uganda currently. The Forum innovated with the only two funded radio talk shows by sponsoring at least eight talk shows on a pre-existing weekend prime time radio programme on radio peace FM known as 'Lawalla me Kuc'. The prime talk show rose in popularity as it regularly hosted key civil society activists and political pundits.

## 2.4 GOVERNANCE AND SOCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY

### 2.4.1 IG CRETA project

Under this theme KINGFO implemented the Community Score Card activity which was introduced by the donor IG to enhance implementation of the CRETA project. The CSC activity was conducted in 16 out of the planned 18 locations across Lamwo and Kitgum district. The activity provided a platform for feedback and joint action planning amongst community members/service users, service providers/Local Government and the Community monitoring groups trained under the project. Several action plans were developed by the three groups of stakeholders at each of the 16 locations to address emerging service delivery and development programme implementation gaps. Different stakeholders and local government departments were charged with the responsibility to deliver on each of the action plans.



*Figure 3 Community Score Card session in Lagoro Sub County attended by the Senior Assistant Secretary, CMG members, community members and KINGFO team. In the background is the organization's car.*

### 2.4.2 CMG follow up and engagement with relevant authorities

As indicated above the CSC conducted set out numerous action points to be addressed by respective stakeholders. KINGFO therefore engaged community trainers under the CRETA project to continue with follow up and technical backstopping to the CMGs to ensure that they deliver on their mandates. A

summary of the findings of the CSC for Kitgum district was compiled and shared with office of the LC V Chairperson for his perusal and action.

Even in the absence of project funds, the project desk engaged in providing technical support to the CMGs in the course of the year. The project desk would for example ensure CMGs schedule monitoring visits in their respective parishes and water sheds. The project desk also addressed arising challenges among CMGs on a case by case basis. In some instances like it happened in Lukwor parish Amida Sub County, the project desk reached out to further investigate an alleged fraud and breach of procedure in a procurement process.



*Figure 4 Follow up by the IG/CRETA desk officer of a CMG in Padibe West Sub County as well as a community tree lot sponsored by the NUSAF III programme*

At the end of October 2020 the organization signed another agreement with the Inspectorate of Government to implement the third phase of the project which involves follow up of CMGs and conducting the community score card. This follows the training of two sets of CMGs in the first and second phases of the project. Apparently the CMGs require continuous support in order to be well grounded in the tasks of public service monitoring that they have been set out to do. In December 2020 the project desk conducted six follow up and two community score card exercises in Kitgum and Lamwo districts. In the exercises the project desk found the CMGs to be a bit disengaged and needful of technical guidance. The CMGs were therefore immediately instructed to conduct monitoring visits at project sites and service

delivery points in their parishes/sub county for subsequent community score card exercises in the first and second quarter of 2021.

#### 2.4.3 The MSH project health social accountability project

This was a social accountability project targeted at health service delivery in health centers IIIs, IVs and hospitals across the four districts of East Acholi. The project was jointly implemented by Kitgum NGO Forum, Pader NGO Forum and Gulu Women Empowerment for Development and Globalization (lead agency) for one year from June 2019 to June 2020. The project worked closely with district level health service managers. Kitgum and Pader NGO Forums implemented the community score card using standard health service assessment tools which captured community reviews of the different aspects of health service provision. Among others the community across the sub region indicated that the health service infrastructure were inadequate, that there was poor handling of clients/patients by health workers, and that the sanitation at most health centers was poor. Towards the end of the project the project consultant presented the findings of the community score card as well as an assessment with the health service providers themselves at a symposium held at Gulu city where a number of recommendations were made to improve health service provision. Again after the Gulu symposium a conference which attracted actors from national, Africa regional and international levels was held in Kampala further synthesize the findings and integrate them in national and international policy and programming frameworks.

### 3.0 BOARD RESOLUTIONS

SN	Resolutions/ Action Points	Action
1.	Members resolved that the matter be addressed legally and immediately	Not yet reported to police
2.	Report to the Police and copy the file number to his current employer, within two weeks	Not yet reported to police
3.	Reprimand the officers who have erred	Officers especially PC advised on how to be more cautious
4.	Consult and inform Board members when recruiting volunteers	This is being done
5.	Call Charity to answer the questions regarding the missing plastic chairs	Charity was put to task and she produced 22 chairs
6.	Identify 03 candidate audit firms to be selected by the EC.	The resources for the exercise is not yet secured
7.	Undertake mobilization of members to subscribe – from the resources to be realized from this source, priority should be given to audit and AGM	The was done
8.	Make sure the exact debt claims are determined and presented to the Board for viable decisions to be made	This was done and two former staff i.e. Lokuju Gabriel (security Guard) and Canlim Livingstone (Driver) were paid at end of the year 2020
9.	Open a debtors' and creditors' register	This was done

10.	Follow up should be made to ensure that KINGFO and other member NGOs are fully validated and on the list	Efforts to get on the validation list is being made by KINGFO and other CSOs
11.	Staff members, Board members and volunteers should engage in serious resource mobilization especially through networking and proposal writing	This being done though there is still room for improvement
12.	PC to sell the idea of Board training to GIZ	This was presented before GIZ-CUSP who welcomed but deferred to exercise to a future date
13.	The PC was advised to review the work plan and budget factoring in the EC resolutions	This was done

## 4.0 EMERGING ACTIVITIES

### 4.1 Revival of the DNMC and the SNMC

A visit by officers from the National NGO Bureau in October 2020 restored hope in the effort to re-launch the District/Sub County NGO Monitoring Committees of Kitgum and Lamwo district. In the meeting the offices of the CAO, the DCDO, a Senior Assistant Secretary/Sub County chief, a CDO, the CSO representative/KINGFO and the DISO were represented. In the meeting the roles of the DNMC/SNMC were revisited as enshrined in the relevant statutes, regulation and NGO Act. On the sidelines KINGFO asked the Bureau officials why their name was not on the validated NGO list to which he offered advice. The Kitgum DNMC were then tasked to come up with a work plan and budget for the committee to do its work.

### 4.2 International Republican Institute - IRI training

KINGFO personnel were involved in a training on peaceful co-existence with refugee leaders and local authorities in the host community of Palodar refugee settlement in Lamwo district. Specifically the training targeted Refugee Welfare Committee leaders and Lower Local Government leaders of Palabek Kal, Gem and Ogili in Lamwo district. The training lasted for four days with two days conducted at Palabel Kal sub county HQ and two days at the base camp at Palodar refugee settlement. KINGFO worked closely with the office of the CAO and the area OPM office for endorsement of the training. The training was financed by the USA based International Republican Institute led by their field facilitator one Mr. Owiny Hakim. The trainees were supported to develop action points which they set out to implement immediately after the training. The IRI was planning a subsequent training on mediation with cultural/tribal leaders in the settlement which was abruptly cancelled due to the 2020 US elections.

### 4.3 NGO Quality Assurance Mechanism – QuAM meeting

QuAM is a self-regulating mechanism for and by the NGO sector which is equally provided for in the national NGO laws and policies. The mechanism was started in the 2000s but never gained traction due to a leadership crisis and limited funding. Recently however DENIVA and the Uganda National NGO Forum which house the QuAM secretariat acquired funding from GIZ-CUSP to revive the mechanism. As such regional workshops were planned and implemented in 2020 across Uganda. For Acholi sub region the workshop was convened by Gulu NGO Forum with support from Kitgum and Pader NGO Forum at Bomah Hotel in Gulu city. KINGFO mobilized CSOs from Kitgum and Lamwo including FOWAC, ARYA, WAC, MPK,

RTL, GRF and Women Voices for Development. The Kitgum and Lamwo team also nominated three veterans to be elected on the regional QuAM committee including Dickens Coolis Oluoch and Jolly Angeyo Watmon. The election took place and a committee was formed. Participating CSOs also picked forms for fully funded QuAM assessment set to follow suit.

#### 4.4 DTF engagements

KINGFO continued to represent and lead the civil society in the COVID 19 District Task Force. This is despite the slowdown in the activities of the committees towards the end of 2020. A CSO committee was set up led by KINGFO and FH Uganda for the purpose of mobilizing and coordinating CSOs in the fight against COVID 19 in the district. CSOs and development partners continued to support the DTF in various ways such as fuel, vehicle, PPEs and live cash for facilitation of medics. KINGFO, FH-Uganda and office of the CAO sent out appeal letters more than twice asking partners to support the committee. However towards the end of 2020 partners had lost confidence in the committee because they did not show commitment and failed to account in a systematic manner for the resources so far provided. This led to poor response to subsequent appeal letters from the committee to the NGOs. KINGFO remain steadfast despite these challenges chart the way forward for CSO in the fight against COVID 19.



*Figure 5 This meeting was specially convened to to form the CSO subcommittee of the COVID 19 District Task Force at the RDC courtyard. Taking the selfie is the PC Kitgum NGO Forum Mr. Babu Robert*

#### 4.5 Formation of CSO resource mobilization consortium

In August 2020 a group of five local CSOs led by Meeting Point Kitgum and ARYA were joint by Kitgum NGO Forum to establish a CSO consortium (christened *East Acholi CSO consortium*) for collaboration, networking and resource mobilization. The consortium sat on a weekly basis at MPK offices behind the Kitgum Post office. The other members of the consortium included Water Access Consulting, ACET, Green Ribbon Foundation and FOWAC. The consortium discussed funding opportunities and the possibilities of joint project implementation. The consortium invited the Gulu regional UN Human Rights led by Ms. Akademia and Ms. Patricia Okello for a half day session on the fundamentals of Human Rights programming/Human Rights Based Approach. The group also subscribed to *Funds for NGO*, a UK based agency that compiles and share quality calls for grant applications across various themes at a fee. The initiative has strengthened relationship between these local CSOs and restored hope for funding of their programme activities.



Figure 6 This was photo opportunity with the UN Human Rights team after the refresher training session at ACET resource center in Kitgum Town

## 5.0 MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION

### 5.1 Personnel

#### Recruitment and departure

The following officers left the Forum for a variety of reasons but mostly poor performance in 2020; Nyeko Brian – Accountant, Opio Renu – Land Rights desk officer, and Okello Leonard – resource mobilization officer/consultant.

In the same year Lajara Sunday Brenda was promoted to the position of Accountant, Opwonya Michael Owiro was appointed to replace Reno as the Land Rights Desk officer and Okot Stephen Omara was appointed as the Coordination Project Assistant. Rubangakene Emmanuel was recruited as a volunteer to support the coordination desk as well as the other project officers.

### **Capacity building**

Opwonya Michael Owiro was seconded by KINGFO for a training with a partner namely PELARD<sup>1</sup> on Monitoring Documentation and Reporting of land rights violation and abuses. He was also trained in cyber security during the same exercise. As a result of the training KINGFO has taken steps to properly conduct its documentation and data protection as well as submit reports of land rights cases on the website of PELARD

Brenda received a refresher training on QUICK Books, earlier the former accountant was trained in the modern accounting system but did not transfer skills or hand over the system's credentials to his replacement due to the manner of his separation with the organization. Brenda is scheduled to receive some more training on the same from GIZ-CUSP in 2021.

Robert the Programme Coordinator and Okot Stephen Omara the Coordination Project Assistant also took part in an advocacy training sponsored by GIZ-CUSP with their private partner NIRAS. The training was conducted online and it took at least three weeks to complete. The two officers successfully completed the training and will soon be issued with certificates.

### **Virtual meeting training**

GIZ CUSP online training on resource mobilization and 'how to conduct online training'; this approach to training is an adaptation that is increasingly being embraced by development partners during the COVID 19 pandemic. GIZ CUSP organized the above two online training using MS Teams for its local partners in Acholi and Lango sub region. Each training took about 1 – 2 hours and were facilitated by GIZ advisors from Kampala office. The training was based on the Organization Capacity Assessment conducted earlier for all CUSP partners and the prevailing needs occasioned by the COVID 19 outbreak.

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<sup>1</sup> An EU funded programme which comprise of three organizations namely GWED-G, HURIFO and Soliterre

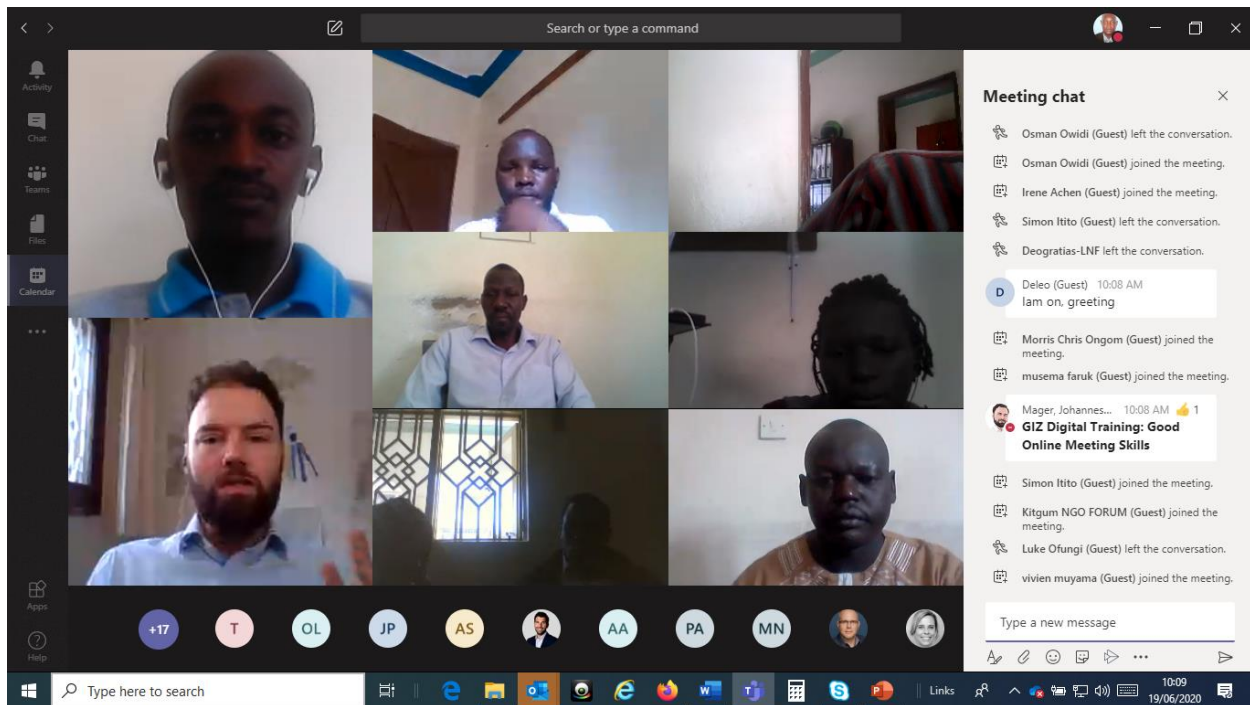


Figure 7 Training on how to conduct virtual/online meetings by GIZ

## 5.2 Finances/assets

**Income and expenditure;** in the year 2020 KINGFO had three running MoUs from GIZ-CUSP, the Northern Uganda Human Rights Partnership – NUHRP, and the Inspectorate of Government. Additionally KINGFO raised some funds from membership and subscription fees. Through these sources the organization was in position to raise funds for its programme and administrative activities. A total sum of about 45,000,000 UGX UGX was raised in the course of the year and 35,000,000 UGX was spent on programme activities and administrative expenditures.

In the year 2020 KINGFO restored its green DT Yamaha motor-bicycle to a road worthy state and deployed it for field activities. KINGFO also acquired computer locks from the National Coalition of Human Rights defenders for its digital security. GIZ-CUSP also provided the organization with an internet modem to aid online communication especially during the COVID 19 lockdown. The organization disposed of its out of use white HP printer to one Gen Rwot computers in accordance with its procurement and disposal policy.

The Asset Register of the organization was updated at the end of 2020 reflecting the serial number, quantity and value of the assets. (See asset register attached to the organization’s financial statement of 2020)

## 5.3 Others

**Sign post;** the organization put up a sign post at the next main road Uhuru drive that passes by its office. On the sign post is the organization’s post office box number, office phone line, the official email address

and the URL for the organization's website. The sign post is expected to increase visibility and provide guidance to visitors/guest intending to come to organization's secretariat.

**Online and social media presence;** the organization is glad to report that it has tremendously boosted its online presence on twitter, Facebook, whatsapp, LinkedIn and most importantly launching its own website. This platforms will increase the visibility and credibility of the organization as its programming content would be continuously uploaded. So far the organization has received good reviews and feedback on its social media accounts. The organization's Facebook and LinkedIn accounts have racked up over 100 likes in less than year since they were launched. The organization intends to enact a social media policy for the management of its social media pages. A social media officer will be designated from among the officers of the organization to manage its online presence.

## 5.4 Membership

Four new organizations namely Northern Uganda Child Returnee Association – NUCRA and Child Development Center - CDC registered and subscribed with KINGFO in the year 2020. 04 registered member organizations including Food for the Hungry Uganda – FH-U, LWF-Lamwo, and Rugby Tackling Life - RTL paid their annual subscription for the year. The general membership of KINGFO and the CSO fraternity at large exhibited a strong solidarity with the Forum. They responded quite positively to numerous calls by KINGFO for coordination and related CSO meetings. It's unfortunate that once again an AGM for the membership could not be conducted in the year 2020 due to financial constraints. We hope to have the AGM conducted this year by all means possible.

## 6.0 ACHIEVEMENTS

Despite the challenges which were brought about by the COVID 19 lock down, KINGFO is proud to highlight some achievements of the year 2020.

- i. Two land conflicts in Mucwini and Omiya Anyima were successfully resolved through the adopted approach of Alternative Dispute Resolution – ADR/Mediation in collaboration with cultural leaders. The organization realized that the approach is preferred by community members especially those seeking justice and peace. The two cases were already referred to the police and the local magistrate court who in their wisdom asked for the matter to be resolved through mediation at the community level hence the intervention of KINGFO land desk and the cultural leaders. The two communities now live peacefully and have re-engaged in productive activities on the contested land parcels.
- ii. Boosting online presence by launching the official organization's website and creating crucial social media platforms for the organization. These sites have improved the organization's visibility and credibility. They have also strengthened the organization's core mandate of coordination whereby individuals and agencies looking for specific information on CSOs are helped out.
- iii. Improvement in CSO coordination through the CSO coordination mechanism for Kitgum and Lamwo districts with support from GIZ-CUSP. In this regard the organization was in position to organize two coordination meetings despite the challenge of COVID 19. The organization was also in position for the first time in several years to launch and have adopted a coordination TOR for and by CSOs.
- iv. The coordination mechanism also witnessed the election and establishment of a coordination structure comprising of Chairperson, Vice Chairperson and Secretary of the coordination

mechanism. Also elected were leaders of Sector Working Groups of about seven sectors including health, education, works, water, natural resources, trade and industry etc. The coordination meeting is scheduled monthly meanwhile the SWGs are encouraged to meet several times in between the coordination meetings to further synthesize their sector specific issues.

## 7.0 CHALLENGES

- i. COVID 19 posed the greatest challenge to CSO work in 2020. Since March when the virus broke out In Uganda most CSOs were forced to scale down operations in accordance with the Standard Operating Procedures – SOPs issued by the MoH. The restrictions particularly affected gatherings of more than 10 participants. This meant that KINGFO could not convene physical meetings of the CSOs in the monthly coordination meeting. The sponsor of the meetings GIZ-CUSP also discouraged any physical meeting during this time. GIZ-CUSP supported efforts to conduct online meetings but this was hardly feasible with local CSOs most of whom do not have the capability (functional laptops/data). As such there was a black out in CSO coordination meetings for six long months (March to September 2020) which affected advocacy.
- ii. The unceremonious departure of the then Accountant and the fraud which he occasioned against the organization created far reaching financial and legal challenges. The case was reported to police but he has gone into hiding, the organization will continue to pursue him until justice is done.
- iii. High staff turnover; this situation also affected the organization in delivery its mandate in the year. Three staff separated with the Forum in an unplanned manner after the organization had spent a good deal of effort in trying to mentor and build their capacities in their designated areas of work.
- iv. Verandah reconstruction; in April 2020 the office car accidently knocked down one of the pillars of the office verandah. The organization agreed to the demand of the land lord that it fixes the damage. This particular challenge was coupled with the damage to the car that the organization also had to fix. The organization had to tighten its belt and drain its reserves in order for the challenge to be surmounted. The verandah was eventually rebuilt at the end of the year but the car is yet to be fixed.
- v. Funding gaps as a result of delays on our side and on the side of donors was a challenge. On our side there was procrastination in report writing which impacted negatively on the timing of the next releases. Secondly the Accounts did not have proper updates of some of the organization's bank balances. Apparently the donor had transferred funds about a month earlier when the Accounts could notice. This consequently led to delays in activity implementation especially under the coordination change project. On the side of the donor lengthy bureaucratic procedures in processing submitted accountability and request for the next disbursement has seen a delay in subsequent fund transfers.
- vi. Limited funding especially for personnel salary and administrative costs; most staff members at the organization worked on a voluntary basis in the year 2020. Those who received monthly salaries including two Community Trainers and the Land Rights desk project officer. The Accountant and Programme Coordinator received only a little salary contribution from one of the projects. The security guard and the welfare assistant were paid their wages on time as in their contracts. Nevertheless the management devised a stipend plan for the rest of the staff and volunteers to smoothen the remuneration gaps.

## 8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- i. The organization should learn to quickly adapt its approach to work in the face of disaster such as COVID 19 which jeopardized most of the 2020. For instance a number of NGOs took to online meeting approaches using Zoom and MS Teams which mitigated the effect of the restrictions on social gathering/physical meetings.
- ii. The organization should continue to pursue the fraudulent Accountant and make efforts to recover the lost funds through legal means in order to set a clear precedence.
- iii. Patience and rigor should be exercised in recruitment of staff and volunteers to avoid bringing on board unsuitable officers who end up costing the organization dearly like in the case of the Accountant.
- iv. Officers of the organization through the Programme Coordinator should ensure more efficiency in activity report writing especially observing time.
- v. The organization should diversify its funding options to avoid the situation of failing to meet mandatory administrative costs as well as crucial programme costs. This can be done by initiating social enterprises for the organization as well as writing fundable proposals.