Summary of Major AFPHA 2019 -2020 Activities

Compiled by Dr. Tewabech Bishaw, Secretary General of the AFPHA

June 2020, Addis Abeba, Ethiopia

Introduction

The year 2019-2020 has been a very difficult year for the AFPHA. This was due to the departure of the Program Officer Mr. Dereje Gebreab on account of lack of funds to pay for his salary. The Ethiopian Public Health Association that was covering the payment of PO’s salary and operational cost was unable to continue to do so due to its own financial crisis. Hence most of 2019 and 2020 the year was spent on efforts to mobilize financial resources to strengthen the operational capacity of the AFPHA which in turn would support the strengthening of National PHAs.

In addition since January 2020, due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, AFPHA has also been engaging with different regional organizations such as WHO-Afro in Brazzaville, and the Africa CDC under the AU to keep abreast on the status of the spread of the pandemic in the continent and globally.

Hence for most of the year activities of the AFPHA were focused on non-finance intense activities.

Please also find, as an example of activities of the AFPHA member association’s Annual Report as an example, the Annual Report of the Uganda National Public Health Association for your information.

1. AFPHA participation in the Governing Council and other Organizational Structure of the WFPHA

The President Dr Mathias SOME, Vice President Dr. Flavia Sengubuge and Secretary of AFPHA and Secretary General Dr Tewabech Bishaw as well as EC members Dr. Deogratis Sikimpi and Dr. Dominique Konji Konji have participated in the various WFPHA related activities.

The AFPHA was also engaged in two special consultative meetings with participants from WFPHA and the GC to explore possible mechanisms to strengthen capacity of the AFPHA.

2. AFPHA Participation in WHO- AFRO

The AFPHA is an active member and continues to play active role in the in identifying priorities and promoting and supporting health research in the region by providing advice to the Regional Director in matters related to Health Research. Dr Flavia Sengubuge, Vice president of the AFPHA serves as the Vice Chair of the Africa Regional Advisory Council
on Health Research while Dr. Tewabech Bishaw, Secretary General of the AFPHA participates as member of the council.

During the reporting period, two regional meetings were held. During the first meeting, the Annual work plan of the Council was drawn and submitted to the WHO Regional Director Dr. Moeti. The second meeting prioritized areas of focus in light of the COVID pandemic and submitted a set of recommendations to the Regional Director on Africa’s Research Priorities.

3. Resource Mobilization to Strengthen Capacity of National PHAs and AFPHA

3.1 The African Federation of Public Health Associations (AFPHA) launched at the August 2011 WHO Regional Committee Meeting in Yamoussoukro, Cote d’Ivoire, now with a Secretariat in Addis Ababa, brings together National Public Health Associations (NPHAs) in Africa (and Public Health Professionals therein) to address African regional and national public health issues from the professional perspective. Some of the NPHAs active in AFPHA include those from Algeria, Burkina Fasso, Cameroun, Congo Brazzaville, Cote d’Iviore, Ethiopia, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal, South Africa, Uganda, Tchad, among others.

This Concept Note from AFPHA was to create an active multi-faceted international, regional and national debate on Africa’s “burning” health issues, with the view to propelling Africa from the predictable, lamentable health dilemma presently experienced, to a situation of sustainable positive health perspectives for African populations, well beyond the SDGs’ magic year of 2030.

3.2 The AFPHA held a discussion with the IGAD Office in Addis Abeba has prepared a prepared a funding proposal for submission. The focus of the proposal is to enhance Cross Boarder COVID-19 Preparedness and Response in the IGAD Member Countries through Capacity Building and Occupational Safety and Health (OSH). Protection of Health Workers and Other COVID (Responders:- and AFPHA and National Public Health Associations in IGAD countries>


The Secretary General of the AFPHA participated in a global Webinar held on 2 April 2020, and 30 May 2020 for experience and best practice sharing.
4.1 The first International Webinar on COVID-19 was organized by Chinese Preventive Medicine Association to share experiences and lessons learned in the prevention and control of the COFID-19 pandemic.

Participants in the Webinar were: Chinese Preventive Medicine Association (CPMA), World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA), Italy, Spain, Brazil, Singapore, Vietnam, Switzerland, Chinese Academy of Science, China-CDC, and I, from the African Federation of Public Health Associations (AFPHA).

The AFPHA shared status of COVID-19 in African countries and shared the Ethiopian experience.

4.2 The Second International Webinar on COVID-19- was again organized by also organized by Chinese Preventive Medicine Association to assess progress and to share experiences and lessons learned in the prevention and control of the COFID-19 pandemic. This was also to celebrate the Annual Chinese day of the Sciences and Professionals in Science.

Participants of the Webinar include Chinese Preventive Medicine Association (CPMA), World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA), Italy, Spain, Brazil, Singapore, Vietnam, Switzerland, Chinese Academy of Science, China-CDC, the African Federation of Public Health Associations (AFPHA), The World Academy of Sciences (TWAS), the African CDC.

Here again lessons learned and best practices were shared by participants of the Webinar. It also outlines future priorities and possible collaborations in the Post COVID-19 period. Emphasis was put on the need for collaborative research and capacity building for an effective Global Response to this and possible future pandemics.

5. Major Challenges during the Reporting period

Major challenges has been the lack of sustained availability of financial resources to strengthen the operational capacity of AFPHA and also to implement planned activities in collaboration with National PHAs, to actively engage in strengthening the capacity of the health sector to meet the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030 and also the AU Goal of 2060.

6. Future Plan

6.1 The AFPHA aims to strengthen its operational and institutional capacity and capacity of national PHAs for effective and visible action in the various African
countries. Major areas of focus will be in community awareness, health system strengthening and building capacity of national and regional capacity for Emergency Preparedness and Response.

6.2 Engage in surveys to determine capacity of APHAs for effective engagement in national and regional health priorities.

6.3 Advocate for and support the development of national and regional plans and collaborate partnership with relevant bodies for effective planning and implementation of Post COVID-19 interventions in the Health Development sector, for Equitable Health for All.

7. An example of a National Public Health Association Activities:

Attached also please find the Annual Report for 2019 of one of the Member Associations of the AFPHA, The Uganda National Public Health Association (UNACOH)
UGANDA NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH (UNACOH)

Annual Report 2019
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT to Funders

We are most thankful to our funders who made it possible for us to carry out the various interventions through their financial, material and moral support. These include the following:

ACEMP
Dialogos, Denmark
FAO Uganda
IOGT NTO Movement, Sweden
UNACOH Members’ Contribution
World Health Organization – Uganda
The National Executive Committee and Secretariat of UNACOH, generally succeeded in implementing the work they set out to undertake for the year 2019. This was the second year of our implementation of the Strategic plan 2018-2022 and I must say that, our performance was commendable on all our three Strategic Objectives that are set out below:

i) to strengthen UNACOH institutional capacity,
ii) to contribute towards improved coordination of public and private health system in Uganda,
iii) to promote Health, Safety and Environment (HSE) action in Uganda.

The capacity of UNACOH as a viable civil society organization has continued to grow. This was evident from the number of partnership Agreements and Memorandums of Understandings signed during the year with different partners at local and international level. It signifies the relevance of the Association in addressing both the national and global health agendas.

As a member of World Federation of Public Health Association (WFPHA), UNACOH was represented at the Annual General Assembly held in Geneva, Switzerland in May 2019. We also had communication with African Federation of Public Health Association (AFPHA) on possible collaborative arrangements. At the local level, we had engagements on various health issues with Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, MGLSD, NEMA, different academia institutions, different CSOs, among others.

Through the on-going projects, UNACOH is directly addressing health related issues relevant to SDGs; the National Development Plan (NDP) 2 which will shortly be ending; and, has participated in the on-going consultations process for NDP3 through the Uganda Health Care Federation platform.

My tenure as UNACOH President has now ended, as I have served two complete terms. On behalf of the National Executive Committee (NEC) and on my own behalf, I wish to express gratitude to the entire UNACOH membership and members of staff for the cooperation accorded to me and the whole NEC members during our years of service. I highly appreciate the opportunity given to me to provide leadership to the Association. As we go into elections for the new office bearers, I wish the new team a great success in furthering UNACOH’s Vision and Mission.
I congratulate everybody for sailing through 2019. At UNACOH, it was a year of great experience in our planning and implementation at both strategic and tactical levels.

At the Secretariat, the staffing grew from 17 to 20 members of staff, as a few more projects came on board. This has enhanced the institutional capacity to develop and manage projects by utilising the diverse technical capacity of the different members of staff, NEC and the general UNACOH membership. In our mentoring programme, we had three interns, one attached to administration and two attached to project work.

As regards to on-going projects, the PHE Project operated in 17 districts across the country on awareness and advocacy for safe Pesticide use and handling in the communities and engagement with leaders. The Alcohol Control Project facilitated the District Alcohol Control Ordinance formulation in Jinja and Masindi Districts, and had a well-attended alcohol control conference in Masindi in September 2019. Other Projects included Free Your Mine (FYM), which started its operations under UNACOH in August, 2019 in Busia District.

In pursuit of our Resource Mobilization Strategy, a Resource Mobilization Officer was recruited to spearhead the implementation of the Strategy. There has been some reasonable momentum in projects development, with the increased number of responses to calls for proposals. I am happy to report that through a competitive process, the UNDP GEF Small Grant Programme awarded UNACOH a two year grant for “Reducing Mercury Use among Artisanal Gold Miners in Amudat District”, which project is expected to commence implementation in February 2020. The “Land for UNACOH Home Project” is endogenous; and UNACOH members who have contributed to it so far deserve a big pat on the back. We are closing in on the targeted Phase 1 UGX 20M!

I wish to thank the National Executive Committee for the dedicated guidance they have rendered to our organization during the 2018-2019 term of office. I acknowledge the tireless effort and team work of the members of staff exhibited during the year in all our endeavors. Special gratitude go to our sponsors and other partners we have collaborated with us in one way or the other. Special mention goes to DIALOGOS, IOGT, ACEMP, FAO, for various funding received. Makerere University College of Health Sciences, WHO, MOH, MAAIF, DGAL and other organisations with whom we have collaborated in the past two years, we are most grateful. Last but not least sincere thanks are extended to all UNACOH members for the persistence, contribution, and participation in the various association activities.

We continue to strive to promote “Health for All and By All” in Uganda and the world over.

Dr. D.K. Sekimpi
The Ag. Executive Director
LIST OF ACRONYMS

AFPHA : African Federation of Public Health Associations
ASGM : Artisanal Small Scale Gold Miners
DGAL : Directorate of Government Analytical Laboratories
GEF : Global Environment Facility
IEC : Information, Education and Communication
JASHC : Joint Annual Scientific Health Conference
MAAIF : Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries
MOGLSD : Minister of Gender Labor and Social Development
MOU : Memorandum of Understanding
NAPE : National Association of Professional Environmentalists
NEC : National Executive Committee
TOT : Trainer of Trainers
UNACOH : Uganda National Association of Community and Occupational Health
VHT : Village Health Teams
WFPHA : World Federation of Public Health Association
WHO : World Health Organization
A part of the implementation process of UNACOH Strategic Plan 2018-2022, some strategic actions were taken that included the Recruitment of a Resource Mobilization Officer (RMO) whose cardinal duty is to actualize the Resource Mobilization Strategy with the view of supporting the implementation of the Strategic plan. In addition, the total number of staff increased to 20 from 17 last year. Also, four (4) new project contracts were signed during the year namely, (i) Two (2) year project with Dialogs, Denmark on reduction of Mercury use by Gold miners, “Free Your Mine Project” (ii) The two (2) year MCH Monitoring and Evaluation Project funded by the Rotary Club of Kampala North and (iii) One (1) month Consultancy work with FAO Uganda on the Assessment of Occupational Safety and Health Risks in the Uganda’s Agriculture Sector. Two other Mercury Free Mining projects were under advance negotiations with Dialogos and UNDP/GEF Small Grants Programme.

UNACOH has institutionalized a Staff performance Appraisal as part of performance management system in the effort to strengthen the Human Resource function (a tool is available). In the same line, a Group Personal Accident (GPA) Insurance Policy was bought covering all staff.

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The National Executive Committee (NEC) chaired by the President had its term of office expired by the end of 2019 and the General Assembly Meeting for the elections of new office bearers was scheduled for 15th February, 2020. The committee had four meetings in the year where operational and strategic decisions were made.

The NEC resolved at the start of the year to have their meetings on a quarterly basis rather than on a monthly basis as had been the case. The Committee arrived at this decision on realization that the turn up at meetings was persistently low for some reasons, among them was that the meetings were too frequent given the tight schedules of most of the members, secondly, members felt that in order to make the meeting more participatory, enough time was needed to be given to the members, so they can prepare and individually present on their portfolio a progress report.
Below was full National Executive Committee for the year 2019

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Patrick Kadama</td>
<td>President</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ms. Monica Filder Odella</td>
<td>Vice President</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. D.K. Sekimpi</td>
<td>Ag. Executive Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dr. Victoria Mukasa Dep.</td>
<td>Ag. Executive Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ms. Max Walusimbi</td>
<td>Treasurer General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Hamidu Kizito Vice</td>
<td>Treasurer General</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Regina Mbabazi</td>
<td>Chair/Scientific Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dr. Rose Chalo Nabirye</td>
<td>Chair/Finance Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Juuko Paul Ndawula</td>
<td>Chair/Publicity Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. David Gusongoirye</td>
<td>Chair/Editorial Committee</td>
</tr>
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Membership Development

Ten (10) new members were recruited in 2019 and 46 members were paid up out of the 3810 members on the register, compared to 66 members paid in 2018. Like it has been in the recent years, majority of the new members were students recruited from the school of Public Health.

UNACOH Annual Business Meeting During the Conference, a UNACOH Business meeting was held at Hotel Africana on the closing day of JASH Conference. This provided an opportunity to share with members from different districts the ongoing activities at the Secretariat and future plans. The Executive Director reported that a lot had been done during the year through project work but also at the strategic level through the National Executive Committee (NEC)

Recommendations from meeting:
- The need for the Secretariat to continue updating the membership register
- Avail members with Membership Cards.
- Consider having more regular member interaction meetings rather than once a year
- Improve communication with members for example making use social media platforms like What's APP

Affiliation and Partnerships

During year under review, UNACOH registered as member of Uganda Health Care Federation (UHF), PELUM Uganda, and signed MOU's with several organizations to partner with on mutually health undertakings, among these include, Uganda Albinism Association and AFIRD.

UNACOH continues to be a member of World Federation of Public Health Associations (WFPHA), African Federation of Public Health Associations (AFPHA), IOGT International, Uganda National NGO Forum, and Uganda Alcohol Policy Alliance (UAPA) among other local umbrella organizations and Networks.
This was a three days scientific conference which was held on 6th to 8th of November 2019 at Hotel Africana. The conference was a merger of Makerere University College of Health Sciences (MaKCHS) 15th Joint Annual Scientific Health Conference, Uganda Medical Association (UMA), the 4th Grand Doctors Conference Habib Medical School, IUIU and Infectious Diseases Institute (IDI); 4th Antimicrobial Resistance conference, Uganda National Association of Community an Occupational Health (UNACOH): 28th Annual conference and the World Health Organisation (WHO) - 18th Dr. Mathew Lukwiya Memorial lecture. This merger was done to maximise both human and financial resources.

The theme of the conference was “Unmasking antimicrobial resistance and other silent epidemics”.

During the three days, there were competitively selected oral presentations which were presented in the various plenary sessions; posters presentations; 5 keynote addresses; 2 panel discussions (One health-AMR data quality improvement and data improvement); a memorial lecture was also held in memory of the late Dr. Mathew Lukwiya, Dr. Margeret Mungherera and the late Prince Badru Kakulungulu Wassajja plus other health workers that lost their lives to Ebola and other infectious diseases.

The scientific conference was a platform where participants networked and shared experiences.

AWARDS TO THE BEST ORAL ABSTRACTS PRESENTED.


2. Abstract-UAN: 007: Factors Associated with Asymptomatic Malaria among People Living with HIV Following Discontinuation of Cotrimoxazole Prophylaxis at Kitgum Hospital, Northern Uganda. Philip Orishaba
3. Abstract-UAN-100: Improvisations in the Emergency Department of Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital (MRRH)

4. Abstract-UAN-124: Prevalence, Bacterial Etiology And Associated Factors Of Umbilical Cord Infections Among Neonates At Kampala International University – Teaching Hospital, Bushenyi. MunanuraTuryasiima


9. Abstract-UAN: 058: The Workplace as a Learning Environment, Perceptions and Experiences of Undergraduate Medical Students at Makerere University College of Health Sciences. Mike N. Kagawa
CHAPTER THREE
Alcohol Control Project

The UNACOH Community and Workplace Alcohol Control Project aims to contribute to improved health and socio economic status in the sugar producing industries and neighbouring communities in Jinja and Masindi districts by 2021 through reduced alcohol consumption. Currently the project targets Sugar industry employees, women, youths (both in school and out school), fisherfolk, elderly, commercial motorcyclists, Local leaders, children and adolescents (in school). In 2019 the project extended its coverage to include Budondo Sub County, Bugembe Town Council, Masese Walukuba Sub County, Karujubu Sub County, Miirya Sub County in addition, to Busede Sub County, Kakira Town Council, Mafubira Sub County, Bwijanga Sub County, Budongo Sub County and Pakanyi Sub County where it operated previously.

Results obtained in 2019
Results highlighted in this section include project progress towards its set anticipated outcomes.

Outcome 1: Reduced risky alcohol consumption patterns among the communities in the project area especially among vulnerable and high risk groups by 2021
In 2019, existing community groups and Village Health Teams with support from UNACOH implemented 56 community sensitization meetings in the alcohol control campaign. Through these activities the project was able to reach these groups were able to reach 1253 community members in both Jinja and Masindi Districts. This has led to a change in perceptions about alcohol with some reporting reduction in alcohol consumption. Alcohol is now perceived as an obstacle to development and good health and wellbeing According to end of year 2019 monitoring and evaluation reports, there has been a 2% reduction in risky alcohol consumption patterns among drinkers.

Outcome 2: Legal restrictions on density of alcohol outlets, accessibility to minors and availability are in place in Masindi and Jinja districts by 2021
The project supported both Jinja and Masindi districts to develop alcohol control ordinances. By the end of 2019, drafts had been developed in both districts. In Jinja District, the final draft Jinja District Local Government Alcohol Control Ordinance was endorsed at District level by all the legally required stakeholders. It was then submitted to Attorney General's office through the Ministry of Local Government to ensure it is consistent with the
National Constitution. Whereas in Masindi, initial draft is currently being reviewed by key stakeholders in the district. Once approved, these ordinance will ensure there are comprehensive legal restrictions on the availability of alcohol, density of alcohol outlets and accessibility of alcohol to minors in these areas.

**Outcome 3:** Alcohol issues are included in the government activities through the established alcohol control platforms in the project area by 2021

In 2019, the project extended to Bugembe Town Council, Budondo Sub County and Walukuba Masese Division in Jinja District and Miirya Sub County and Karujubu Division in Masindi District. Following advocacy and engagement meetings, the leaders in these areas acknowledged alcohol as a problem in their area and committed supporting alcohol control initiatives. In addition four (4) Sub County Alcohol Control Committees were formed in these areas. These committees comprise of up to 15 representatives. These included representatives from the following local government departments (Health, Community Development, Finance and Administration, Environment, Agriculture, Fisheries, Works and Transport, Education) and community (religious leaders, community based organisations and community volunteers). These committees are spearheading the development of locally determined and contextual appropriate strategies to alcohol control in these areas.

Through the advocacy efforts of the Sub County and District alcohol control platforms, alcohol issues were included in various government activities and campaigns. These included Bugembe Town Council Mayor’s week, Busede Sub County Sanitation Campaign and the 1st Masindi District Local Government Alcohol Control Conference.

Alcohol brewing and sale is one of the commonest sources of income for women in Kabango, Masindi. This predisposes women in this area to alcohol related harm. Consequently, the project working together with existing women groups has been conducting business mentorship sessions with alcohol brewers and sellers promoting the adoption of alternative income generating activities. Following this some women (7) have stopped brewing and selling alcohol and adopted other income generating activities. These include basket making, selling snacks and groceries.

There are success stories that have come out of the various community interventions. A case in point is the Alcohol Control Project, where through the mentoring session with groups of alcohol brewers have introduced alternative income generating projects in Masindi and Hinja Districts. Below is a women group telling their story.

“…After selling the basket I made during the training, I decided to try and invest in basket making. I invested 70,000 Uganda Shillings I had earned from my alcohol sales and was able to gain a profit of 40,000 Uganda Shillings… I realised I could earn from something other than selling alcohol…. I am happier as I get more time to rest and feel like a better parent. I spend more time with my children… I can now protect my children from the drunk customers…” Former Alcohol Seller Kabango Town Council.

These women have been able to inspire other women in their community and demonstrated that it is possible to adopt other income generating activities. This has challenged
previous community perceptions of alcohol as a main source of income for communities particularly women. In addition these women have joined village saving and loan associations run by existing women groups. This has contributed to increases access to financial capital. This will contribute to improvements in their livelihood.

Pesticide Use, Health and Environment Project

PHE Uganda Project is one of other projects implemented by UNACOH. The project was conceptualized and started as a pilot project in Agule and Apopong Subcounties in Pallisa district and Nangabo Subcounty in Wakiso district in 2010. Then in the second phase, it was rolled to cover entire districts of Pallisa and Wakiso districts. The third phase of the project is now being implemented in the 17 districts across the county.

PHE Uganda project in pursuit of the project goal “To improve health of Ugandans population through reducing negative health and environment effects from pesticides”, The Project has continued to share information on safe pesticide handling chain to the general public using different fora like workshops, conferences, District Pesticide Steering Committees (DPSC) based at districts, Radio talk shows, IEC production in local languages, Newsletter production and distribution, print and electronic media among others all aimed at making Ugandans healthy and productive.

The project, has also continued to enjoy cordial working relationship with District, Local Governments, Central Government Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), District Farmer Associations (DFAs), Farmer Groups among others. This is part of UNACOHs unrelenting struggle to promote positive health culture by hands on involvement of various stakeholders.

In a nutshell, PHE Uganda project has continued to make an indelible contribution in the area of safe pesticide use and handling and Integrated Pest Management (IPM) adoption in Uganda. In fact it has become a reference points in as far as pesticide safe use and handling is concerned.

This is manifested by, MAAIF recent adoption of Safe use Handling Guide Booklet, that the project produced and the Ministry subsequent request for copies of these Booklets to be distributed across the county.

The project has also attracted Collaboration with various International Universities to conduct studies related to pesticides in Uganda.

PHE project staff has on several occasions been invited to make key note presentations at different fora, both nationally and international.

The project held a multi stakeholder workshop in October, 2019 to disseminate research findings from several research activities ranging from laboratory analysis of tomatoes for pesticide residues to analysis
of community water samples for contamination and consumer perception study about pesticides residues on tomatoes.

The project also has continued to carry out community sensitization meetings at Sub county level across the country.

The project trained Health care workers in all the 31 facilities in Kayunga district on management of pesticides poisoning surveillance in the district. Registers were distributed to all Health facilities in Kayunga district, and monthly collection of reported cases are collected on monthly basis.

The project is pleased to note that, several District Local Governments have embarked on coming up with Ordinances and Bylaws to regulate pesticide misuse and illicit trade in their respective jurisdictions. PHE Uganda project took the task of developing a proposal document towards the establishment of National Poison Information Centre (NPIC) specialized unit that advises on, and assists with the prevention, diagnosis and management of poisoning through a telephone based information service. NPIC Toll Free Number: 0800100450

A position paper on pesticide use in Uganda has been produced to be used as one of the advocacy tools for lobbying purposes with Government, Parliamentarians and other key stakeholders.

In order to consolidate the project Advocacy and Lobby role, PHE is now a member of the Uganda Farmers Common Voice Platform (UFCVP) an advocacy platform under Caritas Uganda.

The project has also continued to attract partners in the Agriculture related fields and signed MOUs namely:-

- PELLUM an organization promoting Agro Ecology in Uganda
- Sukuma (U) Ltd and organization promoting Biological control of pests.

District Pesticides Steering Committees (DPSC) were established in the 17 districts where the project is being implemented and Terms of Reference (TOR) agreed upon aimed at spearheading the sensitization aspect on safe pesticide use and handling in their respective districts.

As the project, comes to an end in September, 2020, a call for Bids for expression of interest for External project Evaluator will be sent out soon.

In conclusion, the project Team is pleased to note that all project activities are on the right track and the remaining activities will be implemented as scheduled in the work plan.

FREE Your Mine Project

During the month of August and September, UNACOH and Dialogos held a number of on-line discussions regarding ways to re-start the Free Your Mine project as a follow up on the face to face discussions held in July. The discussions involved development of a roadmap for the project implementation, developing activity work plan, re-adjusting the budget to suite new project realities, and developing terms of reference for the field staff.

In the second week of September, the UNACOH project team held introductory meetings in Busia district to inform the district leaders and local partners of the new changes in the management of the project and to introduce to them the new project partners and staff. During the introductory meetings, three major issues were agreed upon with the district leaders namely;

- UNACOH holds an inception meeting at Busia District headquarters
- UNACOH holds an inception meeting at Sikuda Sub-County.
- Development of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between UNACOH and Busia District Local Government
visited the project site in Tiira, held meetings with the Executive of TISMA, women and youth miners; and the Demonstration Site Management Committee. However, from the team’s assessment, the demonstration facility had for some time not been in operation and this was attributed to the excessive rains in the region that had flooded most pits and made it difficult for the miners to continue with their mining activities.

Between the third and last week of September, UNACOH developed a draft Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Busia District Local Government Administration. The draft MOU was shared with the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) and the District Community Development Officer (DCDO) for their input before it was signed-off in the last week of October. The signing of an MOU with the district is a mandatory requirement and it is legally supposed to be a precursor of any UNACOH activities. The MoU has since been signed. In the second week of October, UNACOH held project inception meetings at the district headquarters and at Sikuda Sub-County, in Busia District to introduce the project and its interventions to the different stakeholders in the district. All stakeholders from both the district, and Sikuda Sub-County embraced, and pledged their total support to, the project.

Between September and October, draft educational materials to raise awareness on mercury toxicology among school children and health care workers were being developed. This was complete in November, 2019.

In the second week of October, UNACOH facilitated miner groups from Buhweju district to petition the Speaker of Parliament of Uganda about their concerns. The miners concerns raised heated debate in the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda and attracted the attention of both print and electronic media in Uganda. The parliament of the Republic of Uganda supported the miners to resume their mining activities but are yet to get operational licences.

In mid-October, UNACOH advertised the post of project field officer at community level within the mining area in Busia District. Applications for the position were received and 3 applicants were shortlisted and
interviews conducted on 5th November, 2019. Mr. Marauni Shadrack was selected as the field officer.

Positive issues that have arisen and may influence project success.

- During the project introductory meetings with the district leadership, UNACOH and the project were welcomed in Busia district
- All the stakeholders in Busia district, embraced the project and pledged to collaboratively work with the project team to ensure that the project succeeds. They suggested that the project should go beyond mercury in ASGM and also look at mercury-added products.
- They also proposed that UNACOH should address the issue of Cyanide, which is also a very dangerous chemical used in gold mining process in the district.
- Miners expressed willingness to change from mercury dependent gold extraction method to the mercury-free method after learning that Busia is one of the most impacted districts with mercury poisoning.
- During project inception meeting at the Sub-county, local leaders expressed willingness to develop “By-laws” to stop the use of mercury in their mining communities
- Miners proposed modification of the sluice part of the machine (a Z-like structure) to make it work faster.

- Parliament of Uganda has been very supportive of the local miners in their endeavor to carry their mining activities and has to this effect instructed them to go back to the mines and carry out their businesses
- The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) has continued to be very supportive of the Mercury free method being promoted by UNACOH

Citations and small individual stories concerning the project:

“*This project should have come yesterday; it is frightening to learn that most of the food we are consuming in Busia may be contaminated with mercury. “We are all not safe.” As leaders we will ensure that mercury use is stopped*”

Deputy Chief Administrative Officer - Busia

“It means we are all sick from mercury poisoning, we should not wait for government. We need a By-law in Sikuda Sub-couty to stop mercury other than waiting for government”

Ssegawa Ronald – Councilor Sikuda

“I am a teacher, I am not a miner and I do not interact with mercury, but I am poisoned by mercury like a passive smoker, Mercury should be stopped in

Sikuda”
Primary school teacher in Sikuda.

“* I have used Mercury for all the years I have been into mining, but this stopped yesterday after I attended the inception meeting at the district. I will never use mercury again and will ensure that others do the same*”

Local Council 3 Chair person, Sikuda Sub County.

“This is a good project but people with disability have not been considered”
Person with disability, Sikuda Sub-County- Busia district.
UNACOH Investment Club

is active and operational.
Everyone is welcome to join, taking note of the terms and Conditions.

“Health for All and By All”

Objectives of the Club

1. To mobilize savings from members to accumulate a capital pool that can be invested in capital or money market or any other safe investment option that earns a good return for the members

2. To act as platform that brings members together to advance the cause of UNACOH

Who is eligible?

Only members and staff of UNACOH

Obligations

• Making a monthly savings of UGX 50,000/= plus UGX 10,000/= (contribution to administrative costs)
• A commitment to make savings consistently
• Attending the Club Annual General Meetings

PICTORIAL

depicting some of the events in 2019 at a glance

UNACOH NEC Members at the Alcohol Conference in Masindi

Dr. Erik Jors from Denmark on a monitoring visit at UNACOH secretariat

UNACOH FYM team meeting project stakeholders in Busia
“Health for All and By All”

UGANDA NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF COMMUNITY AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH (UNACOH)

VISION:
An informed, healthy and economically productive Ugandan population

MISSION:
To promote a positive health culture among the Ugandan population and influence healthy public policies through promoting the principles of Primary Health Care (PHC)

CORE VALUES
- Integrity
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Gender Sensitivity

PESTICIDE USE IN UGANDA: Perspectives for Human and Environmental Health

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PHE Uganda Project
Pesticide Use, Health & Environment
Addressing Pesticide Exposure and Use