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Innovator Mentoring and Training Programme Module 01: Understanding Poverty

Content: The first goal that formed the United Nations (UN) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) was to eradicate extreme poverty and hunger from the world and within a 15-year period that ended in 2015. Specifically, the target was to reduce by 50 percent the percentage of people living on less than US\$ 1.25 a day. Sadly, this target was not achieved in Sub-Saharan Africa, Uganda inclusive. Why so?

Following the failure of the MDGs to eliminate poverty from the world by 2015, the UN has a new blueprint, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs); of which the first goal is to end poverty in all its forms everywhere and over a 15-year period that ends in 2030. Unlike the MDGs, however, the SDGs now consider people living on US\$ 1.90 a day or less as the ones who are living in extreme poverty and of whom the overwhelming majority live in Sub-Saharan Africa and in South Asia. Why and how will the SDGs succeed where the MDGs did not?

CPAR Uganda's target geographic operational programme area is Greater Northern Uganda – West Nile, Acholi, Lango, Teso and Karamoja sub-regions; hence it is the primary geographic focus for its Innovator Mentoring Programme. There have been thousands of targeted poverty eradication initiatives for and in Greater Northern Uganda by the Government of Uganda and other actors. Initiatives of which some were most likely part of the implementation of the MDGs and currently the SDGs.

In spite of thousands of poverty eradication initiatives, however well meaning, poverty sustains unabated and thriving in Greater Northern Uganda. This region is in fact the poorest in Uganda. A significant number of households, 36 percent of the region's population, are living below the poverty line. This is according to the most recent Uganda Household Survey. Why does poverty continue to exist in Greater Northern Uganda? Is it a unique case or is it similar to other regions in Uganda, in Sub-Saharan Africa, in South Asia and in other parts of the world?

Is it feasible that a significant section of those who are involved in policy development; those who translate policies into projects or programmes for implementation; and those who implement projects or programmes; have an insufficient understanding of the concept of poverty? If so, the thesis of this model is that it is feasible that their insufficient understanding of poverty is a root cause as to why well meaning poverty elimination initiatives fail.

Many policy makers, implementers, and ordinary citizens, particularly so in and for Sub-Saharan African countries, such as Uganda, seemingly, have not taken the time to genuinely analyse poverty and more so to contextualize their analysis relevant to Sub-Saharan Africa.

For instance, does the suspicion hold true that:

- Some actors with a role in poverty elimination endeavours have not consciously and realistically analysed why the MDGs failed.
- The same reasons for the failure of MDGs have carried forward and are now perhaps encoded within the SDGs?
- Some actors have an insufficient understanding of poverty as it manifests and affects the lives of those living below the poverty line?



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It is the intention of this model thus to facilitate processes during which the participants experience a life-changing conscious awakening through conducting their own in-depth qualitative analysis of poverty, including, but not limited to, them investigating a variety of questions and arriving at answers to such questions as:

- Can one see poverty in one's community? How will one see it?
- Can one know poverty when one sees it? How so?
- How is poverty measured?
- When one applies the concept of poverty, what does it mean to them?
- What does one's application of the concept of poverty mean to others, particularly those whom one categorises as poor?
- What does living in extreme poverty truly mean?
- Is the experience of living in extreme poverty universal the world over?
- Is the experience of living in extreme poverty the same for all who experience such poverty?

In essence, in order to facilitate an in-depth analysis of poverty, this model will cover three broad topics: Conceptions and Measurements of Poverty; Causes and Symptoms of Poverty; and Where to start in the "Fight Against Poverty". This module, in addition, will also cover the following two major aspects that are significant determinants of one gaining a holistic and an in-depth understanding of poverty: Gender and Messaging.

On Gender and Poverty, the focus will be on discussing such questions as:

- How does one's gender facilitate or not the likelihood of being among those that are living below the poverty line?
- Are persons of the different genders – male, female, transgender – equally experiencing poverty? How so? How not so?

Under the sub-topic of Gender and Poverty, therefore, this module will cover the following five broad topics: Gender, Gender Roles and Gender Issues; Men's and Women's Situations; Women's and Men's Participation; Gender and Income; and Changing Gender Attitudes.

On Poverty Messaging, the focus will be on facilitating participants' self-reflections on questions such as:

- What is the impact – positive and negative - of how one communicates poverty and about poverty? Including, for example, the messages encoded in communiqués on and about poverty and the messages decoded from such communiqués.
- How does the manner in which one communicates on poverty facilitate or not the success of poverty elimination initiatives?



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- How does the manner in which one communicates on poverty match or not with the perspectives and the perceptions of those who are living in poverty and for whom poverty elimination initiatives are targeted?

Under the sub-topic of Poverty Messaging, therefore, this module will cover the following five broad topics: Communication; Communication Skills; Problem Solving; Resolution of Conflict; and Barriers to Communication.

Objective: The overall objective of the CPAR Uganda Innovator Mentoring and Training Programme is to produce active citizens who will proactively innovate, initiate, and facilitate processes that will lead to improving standards of living among the poor and that will ameliorate deprivation in their communities. The design, therefore, of each of the four training models of this programme, including this one, is such that each contributes to the achievement of this overall objective.

Each module will contribute towards the programme producing active citizens who are innovators, highly skilled and positively consciously awakened. More specifically, at the end of their training and mentoring, after the entire programme, the participants will be able to conduct rational analyses of their own attitudes and actions; and of the existing social, cultural, economic and political relationships in their communities. And they will be motivated to want to take action to contribute to the greater good.

Trainer: The lead trainer is Ms. Norah Owaraga and she identifies as a cultural anthropologist, a development manager, a social entrepreneur and a philanthropist. She holds a Master in Science degree in Development Management from the Open University, UK and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication Studies from Queen Margaret University, Edinburgh, Scotland.

Her professional work experience spans since 1992, during which time she has worked as a senior executive of civil society organisations operating in Uganda and of which since April 2012 she is the Managing Director of CPAR Uganda. During the 27+ years of her professional work experience, Owaraga has accumulated a wealth of practical knowledge and skills on all aspects of administration of non-profit organisations; on human-centred policy development and on programme implementation in a wide range of thematic areas.

During the course of her career, Owaraga has mentored and trained hundreds, including those who have worked under her charge as employees; others who were employed by a range of other organisations; and individual men and women among the direct beneficiaries of development programmes.

Participants: Young adults who have had tertiary level formal education are the primary target group that CPAR Uganda strategically desires to train and to mentor – they could be students and they could as well be those who have recently completed their formal tertiary education; of whom some could already be in formal employment; while others could be seeking employment; and others could be exploring self-employment.

Method of training: The training sessions will be conducted utilising the best practice of self-reliant participatory methodologies in which the role of the trainer is primarily to facilitate discussions as opposed to top-down lecturing. The format of the training sessions will be dominated with the use of tools that encourage and inspire those being mentored to actively participate in discussions in plenary sessions and in group discussions. The norm during the training sessions shall be the utilisation of such tools as: question and answer sessions; role plays; exercises; case studies; and others. The fieldwork periods are designed to allow individual reflection as well as to lead to an appreciation of group or team work.



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Training material

Utilising her own experiential learning and findings of empirical research that she and as well as other scholars and practitioners have conducted, the lead trainer, Ms. Norah Owaraga, has developed the training materials for CPAR Uganda's Innovator Mentoring and Training Programme. She did so in close consultation with the CPAR Uganda Board Chair, Prof. Christopher Garimoi Orach, who is currently the Deputy Dean of the Makerere University Kampala School of Public Health.

The materials are significantly influenced by the work of Stan Burkey, the author of the book: *"People First – A Guide to Self-Reliant Participatory Rural Development"*; and her mentor with whom she worked closely in the implementation of the Change Agent Training Programme in Uganda.

Location:

The training will be located at CPAR Uganda's Lira Learning Centre that is located at Plot 5 Makerere Road in Lira Municipality in Lira District in Northern Uganda. CPAR Uganda's Lira Learning Centre is located on substantial grounds on which it has established demonstrations for urban yard gardening for nutrition and income generation. The Learning Centre hosts: Offices, CPAR's Kitchen – canteen and restaurant, CPAR's Business Centre, CPAR's Professor Fred Opio Ekong Research Resource Centre; and a Training Hall. These units at the learning centre are each operated under the social enterprise model and will be a crucial element of delivering this mentoring and training programme.

Duration:

11-days of non-residential training sessions and 12 days of fieldwork; total 23 days.

Evaluation:

In the longer-term, the indicators of success for this programme are that standards of living will improve for households of at least 70 percent of those mentored and of other households within their communities that come into contact with them. This will come about because benefiting households will actively engage in agricultural production for dietary diversity and nutrition, income generation and environmental conservation; that they will improve their social and economic well-being; and that the programme graduates will participate in public discourse and will lobby for better public healthcare services.

In order to demonstrate the achievement of the programme's defined success, CPAR Uganda has established an elaborate monitoring system that will systematically collect relevant data on each participant. The data collection tools include, for each and every participant:

- Taking a baseline survey.
- Being continuously monitoring and assessed during the training using exercises, self-assessments, assessment by fellow trainees and by the trainers.
- Post training participant censuses.

Cost:

The unit cost for training and mentoring one participant for this module with a cohort of 25 participants is budgeted at UGX 800,000 (eight hundred thousand Uganda shillings), which is about US\$ 215 (two hundred and fifteen United States dollars). This means that the budgeted cost for training one young adult is UGX 35,000 (thirty five thousand shillings) per day, less than US\$ 10 (ten US dollars) per day. This cost includes the acquisition of and the provision to participants in-kind of the following: training equipment and materials; housekeeping materials; accommodation; meals (three per day); use of training hall; use of research resource centre; and the training team.