

From the Editor

Noticeably February was brief due to a number of public holidays, but glad we are still moving on steadily as one popular political party puts it: #steadyprogress and we emulated the same during that period, as we achieved quiet a number of things despite the distractions here and there. Welcome to the month of March!

I commend the team for the fruitful end of month staff meeting that not only gave chance to the different programs and units to evaluate their progress with proposed plans but brought the rest of the team up to speed with ongoing and implemented processes.

This month though, many expectations are lifted as most of the plans are big but this is a team that never disappoints. I will continue to re-echo the need for all of us to engage in writing pieces. This is not only good practice for mentorship but an opportunity to take your writing skills to another level. For that matter, Community Empowerment Program will be trained in writing skills this month, all factors constant. Enjoy the highlights for the period in focus.

Megan - Communications Officer

ONE ON ONE WITH DONOR REPRESENTATIVE: MR. OAMAR



It is always a great pleasure to meet with someone who voluntarily supports your cause financially. This is what happened on 29th February 2016 when Mr. Qamar paid a visit to CEHURD and shared different aspects regarding the work CEHURD does, interacted with the staff and got to understand the organisation better. Mr. Qamar is a donor representative of The International Development Research Centre (IDRC) an International Organisation that is supporting equity for health rights work that CEHURD is implementing. IDRC equally has great interest and focus on Research, Community related work and Health Advocacy which CEHURD is successfully implementing with other partners.

Mr. Qamar who met with all staff members and later had a one on one with specific IDRC project implementers under the different units and programs, was impressed with how hardworking and efficient the team is and equally expressed the need to continuously have an open forum of sharing developments on the work as they emerge. This was to the CEHURD team's advantage as he further shared important ideas and tips regarding how the projects being funded can best be managed. After two days of engagement both at the CEHURD offices and in the field, he was able to share the successes of the team at CEHURD and commended the team for the great work done so far.

Indeed it was a great opportunity for CEHURD to have MR.Qamar visit the team and always looking forward to similar engagements and opportunities.

SOCIAL MEDIA FOR MATERNAL HEALTH



The use of Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+, Wordpress, name it; took the world by storm and every business and person with access to internet has heard of these applications but most importantly attempted to use or are using them. It is for that matter that CEHURD under the Research Documentation and Advocacy program organised a meet, greet and interact session for social media influencers.

Social media influencers as termed, are usually individuals who may use social media platforms to discuss pertinent issues and equally have many followers or people who engage on their posts. It can be anyone who not only gets many comments once they express themselves on an issue, but likes meaning they are able to influence discussions using these platforms. The engagement, which was referred to as 'Social Media Salon' was an opportunity to bring on board a group of young social media influencers, to discuss issues of maternal health giving safe abortion focus. Over 12 influencers were facilitated on sessions regarding the status of safe and un safe abortions in Uganda today, what they can do about it and how. Gladly after these sessions that different experts in the field shared about, the minds of the these young people were shaped in regards to the issues and some of the myths broken. They therefore acknowledged the usefulness of the engagement, that enlightened them and changed perception. Key from this event was the need to have this group take the knowledge they learned to social media and educate their followers and friends about what they learned.

LEVERAGING THE RIGHT TO HEALTH ON TELEVISION

Center for Health Human Rights and Development took on the onus of spreading knowledge about the right to health, while focusing on the Patients Charter, by utilising main stream media with Print, Radio and Television. Bukkede television, which is known for it's big local following hosted a team from CEHURD to discuss and share knowledge on the issue, so did one of the biggest television stations in Uganda; which is NTV. Hosted during the morning shows, the team from CEHURD enlightened the viewers for both stations about their right to medical care and appropriate health care, and the need to utilise the Patients Charter as a tool to demand for accountability from duty bearers regarding these rights. The two talk shows that took an average of two hours, were a great platform for publicity for the Patients Charter and the work that CEHURD has done around it, in an effort to ensure that the public utilises it.



It was noted during the talk shows from the viewers who called in, that Ugandans hadnot been aware about the "Patients Charter" and therefore the need for another media campaign to ensure that grass root communities also benefit from such important discussions, which is also under thought to reach them through community media and other sources.

PROGRESS WITH PETITION 22

Clad in suits and formal attire, three lawyers representing CEHURD made it to court, as a conference on the hearing of the Plant Varieties Protection Act, a case against the Government of Uganda for infringing on farmers rights was set on this day, the 8th of March 2016. The team was ready for the next step to ensure the petition makes progress. Filed in 2015, petition 22 against the Plant Varieties Act, looks at protecting farmers rights which plant breeders violate with authority given to them in this Act, being challenged on grounds that it violates the principle of exhaustion of rights as it was passed without ascertainment of quorum in Parliament of Uganda and was developed in violation of the right to participation.

Ideally, the Act bars, farmers from the free will to exchange or share seeds that have been accessed from seed bearers for commercial use, or purposes of sharing the new breed in order for the whole farming community to benefit from it. The Act gives an originator sole control over sharing and reproduction of the breed(seed) he has come up with and for a country like Uganda, this affects its traditional agricultural practices, such as sharing and expansion of the trade being the biggest source of income. It is a foreign practice that threatens success of our traditional practices.

Other events as they will and have happened;

- CEHURD gets a second field vehicle to support teams while implementing work.
- Commemorating Women's day on March 8th 2016, celebrating the source of life on earth
- 24 March Commemorating International Day for the Right to the Truth concerning Gross Human Rights Violations and for the Dignity of Victims