

FROM THE CARITAS KAMPALA DIRECTOR

We are pleased to announce the launch of our newsletter after another year of hard work and dedication in support of the development of cooperatives in the Archdiocese of Kampala. Our goal with this new newsletter is to provide an easier way for stakeholders to learn more about the work Caritas Kampala is doing with cooperatives. Since 2015, our efforts have been strengthened by partnering with Viatores Christi from Ireland, through an approved project by Misan Cara, funded by Irish Aid. This journey has enabled the development of an effective capacity building framework put into practice by combining implementation of new policies, tools and equip-

ment to improve transparency and accountability (to eliminate and transparency and accountability, to ensure better quality of services delivered to members.

We are grateful to the Archbishop of Kampala, Dr. Cyprian Kizito Lwanga for his continuous support to our work, our partners, and our team at Caritas Kampala. The success of this project mainly depends on the quality of participation, level of engagement and sharing of practical experiences of our leaders, and staff and members.

We hope you find the new newsletter refreshing and informative. We would also love to receive contributions from our readers in our next issues.

Mission

The mission of Caritas Kampala Cooperatives Office is to support development of cooperatives: The cooperatives principles and values make them a unique and effective model to promote social and economic inclusion as they are member-driven, controlled and owned. The different types of cooperatives under the Archdiocese of Kampala - agricultural, multipurpose or SACCO - are rooted in parishes, providing access to financial resources for the development of small businesses and offering livelihood opportunities. At the same time, they are cultivating the Church values of togetherness and solidarity.

ESSAY WRITING COMPETITION

A competition was organised among all members - excluding the leaders - of the 37 cooperatives to write about the factors that motivated them to become members. The competition was run under the theme: Why am I a member of this cooperative? The essays were accepted in English and Luganda, typed or handwritten. The first five winners, who won cash prizes, were:

- Dennis Ssekitto from Kawempe Cooperative - Shs300,000
- Gabriel Ssazi from Kitakyusa Farmer's Cooperative - Shs200,000
- Joan Nakyeyune from KADCOS Nsambya Cooperative - Shs100,000
- Grace Nakibuuka from Munaku Kaama Kisubi Cooperative - Shs50,000
- Thecia Nakiganda from Matugga Cooperative - Shs50,000

The next fifteen winners won a T-shirt each.



OUR COOPERATIVES IN THE NATIONAL NEWS

Two articles were published in the *Daily Monitor*, a national newspaper, in September 2018. One article about the work of the coffee factory in Mpigi district which benefits six cooperatives, was titled, How farmer groups eliminated middlemen. Another article about Naddangira, Munaku Kaama Kisubi and KADCOS Nsambya SACCOs was titled Church-based SACCOs helping communities overcome poverty. The publications gave a voice to our grassroots cooperatives, advertising their work; raising public awareness, understanding and support for cooperatives; and recognising Caritas Kampala's efforts.



FROM TRAINING TO EXPOSURE

The project trained leaders and staff in three new areas: governance and leadership, delivered by the Uhuru Institute for Social Development (TUI); financial management and accounting and credit management for cooperatives, delivered by Uganda Cooperative Saving and Credit Union Limited (**UCSCU**). A discussion on policies during the training resulted in the organization of the Governance Charter, Financial and Accounting Policies, and Credit and Lending Policy for our cooperatives. In total, 32 training sessions were delivered.

In July 2018, an exposure visit was organised to the National Union of Coffee Agribusiness and Farm Enterprises (NUCAFE) in Namanve, East of Kampala. The 31 farmers from

six agricultural cooperatives who participated built their knowledge on the coffee chain, from production to the cup. An additional exposure visit was organized for 17 smaller SACCOs in November 2018 to a cooperative model - KADCOs Nsambya.



EQUIPMENT ACQUIRED

Nineteen cooperatives benefited from the distribution of seven sets of computers and printers, six sets of furniture and ten strong boxes. The equipment was equally distributed to reach a higher number of groups, strengthening structural growth and enabling societies to meet their operating costs to enhance service delivery to their members.

Caritas Kampala has set up a partnership agreement with Kabatech Computer Centre to purchase 30 licenses for SACCO Management System software to be implemented from January 2019. It is a comprehensive package that was further customised and provides accounting reports such as, income and expenditure statements, financial position and statements of cash flows, and will enable SACCOs to expand and improve the accuracy and quality of data collected.

COMMUNITY MOBILISATION

The office engaged over 6,000 community members in 11 activities in different parishes to educate and sensitise them on the benefits of the cooperative model. These activities included five annual general meetings, three parish council meetings, four parish celebration days, and eight talks after Sunday Mass to mobilise new members to for the cooperatives.



ADVOCATING FOR COOPERATIVES

Caritas Kampala has continued its engagement with the stakeholders in the national sector to advocate for cooperative development to influence decision makers in public policy and legislation. In April 2018, Caritas mobilised cooperatives to engage in the campaign to reinstate the Ten Years Tax Exemption for SACCOs, which reached the goal of upholding the tax exemption status.

In September 2018, a meeting was held with Hon Frederick Ngobi Gume, the Minister of State of Cooperatives. It was a rewarding opportunity for the Caritas delegation to present

a brief of our work, challenges and opportunities for mutual collaboration with the government. Among the points presented was a request for a progressive implementation of the new laws and regulations, allowing for a transition period to protect the grassroots cooperatives from failure.

