

QUARTERLY NARRATIVE REPORT

NARRATIVE REPORT QUARTER FOUR, OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2024



Report prepared and submitted by: Change Lead Agency Social Support (CLASS)

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Report Public

List of acronyms

ACTADE	African centre for trade and development
AYF-SRHR	Adolescent youth Friendly Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
CAO	Chief Administrative Officer

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CAY	Children, Adolescent and Youth
CC	Climate change
CLASS	Change Lead Agency Social Support.
COC	Champion of Change
DC	District Coordinator
EAs	Enumeration Areas
HHs	Households
IDD	Innovation and Digital Development
LC1s	Local Council I
LC5	Local Council V
LCs	Local Councillors
MCR	Motorcycle repair and maintenance
PIU	Plan International Uganda
PWD	Person with disability
RDC	Resident District Commissioner
S/C	Sub county
SRHR	Sexual and reproductive health and rights
STI/STD	Sexually transmitted infection/Sexually transmitted diseases
T/C	Town council
VC	Village Coordinator
VSLA	Village saving and loans association

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 About Change Lead Agency Social Support (CLASS)

Change Lead Agency Social Support (CLASS) is a youth-focused nongovernmental organization started by people of like-minded and zeal to do charitable work in Uganda. It is registered with URSB (**Registration Number: 80020002304277**), legally registered with Uganda National NGO Bureau (**Registration Number: INDR156284736NB**), Alebtong District Local Government (**Registration Number: ADLG/2020/147**), Amugu Sub County Local Government (**Registration Number: ASLG/CBS/001/020**) and affiliated to Lango Civil Society Network (LACSON) formerly

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Lira NGO Forum (**Registration Number: LF/NGO/LR/1310**), Girls Not Brides Uganda Partnership to end child marriage, National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Uganda, Digital Rights Alliance Africa, Uganda Network of AIDS Service Organizations (UNASO) with a permit (**Permit Number: NDP0004736NB**) to operate nationwide and with certificate from Finance Intelligence Authority of Uganda (**Registration Number: FIA-14-001137**). CLASS is currently working in Alebtong District since its inception in 2016 towards promoting the wellbeing of children and youth in the areas of education, SRHR, WASH, Food and Nutrition, HIV/AIDS, SGBV, youth participation, youth economic empowerment and climate change response.

1.2 Vision, Mission & core values

Vision: A global centre for promoting the wellbeing of children and youth

Mission: To facilitate change for socioeconomic wellbeing of children and youth

Core values: Respect for humanity, partnership, transparency and accountability, commitment to law and justice

1.3 CLASS main objectives

- 1) To be a lead voice for children and youth.
- 2) To give chance to children/youth to participate and contribute positive advocacy for child justice and wellbeing
- 3) To enhance sustainable conservation and protections of environment and disaster response.
- 4) To promote access to education for vulnerable groups.
- 5) To support programs that increase access to safe, clean water and basic sanitation.
- 6) To mobilize and equip individuals on food security and nutrition.
- 7) To create gender awareness and mainstream gender in socioeconomic development.
- 8) To promote sexual reproduction health and rights, and tackle Sexual Gender Based Violence and HIV/AIDS.

1.4 CLASS core Programs

1. Child Development and Child Protection.
2. Youth Economic Empowerment and Participation.
3. Social norm changes and Gender transformation.
4. Climate change (emergency/disaster response program).
5. Research.

CLASS Partners

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- 1) Plan International
- 2) Uwezo Uganda
- 3) Alebtong District Local Government
- 4) Lira NGO Forum
- 5) Reproductive Health Uganda

CLASS conducted the following activities during quarter four (October to December, 2024) mainly with funding support from Plan International and technical support from partners such as Reproductive Health Uganda, LIDUPED Foundation, ACTADE, and CDFU;

- a) Training of cohort 3 champions of change members on CoC modules.
- b) Support CoC group activities and functionality.
- c) Core course and Life Skills training of cohort 4 through Innovation Hub.
- d) Vocational/Green skills training of cohort 4 through the Innovation Hub.
- e) Business skills training of cohort 4 through the Innovation Hub.
- f) Parents' engagement on building bridges curriculum through VSLA.
- g) Youth led Advocacy.
- h) Participation in Annual climate change reflection meeting.
- i) Participation in Annual partnership reflection meeting.

Outcome 1: Children, adolescents, and youth in all their diversity have the support and the confidence to make informed, responsible, positive, and healthy choices about their SRHR and future

Output 1.1 Children, adolescents, and youth have improved skills and knowledge on SRHR, healthy and positive sexuality, intimate relationships, and gender roles.

Progress notes and description of activities carried out.

Activity 1.1.1 Training Out of School CAY through CoC clubs.

Training of cohort 3 champion of change

This was a continuation of the CoC training sessions that commenced on 11th and 18th July, 2024 at Aconyobo village (Alanyi Catholic Mission), Alanyi Parish Abako Sub- County and Obangangeo village, Abongatin parish-Amugu Sub County where the champion of change groups were registered. The Champion of change for gender equality and girls' rights is an initiative that work with young people out of school aged 15-24 years within a particular community mentored to advocate for gender equality and girls' rights since it is a fundamental requirement or basics in life of every young person. The overall objective of this training was to mobilize girls and boys who are out of school to collectively reflect on and challenge negative

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social/gender norms around what it means being a boy/young man and a girl/young woman in their community.

During this quarter, a total of 76 youth (39 female and 37 male) i.e. 33 youth (17 females: 16 males with 1 male PWD) in Alanyi-Abako and 43 youth (22 female: 21 male) in Abongatin parish Amugu Sub County were trained on the following 4 modules;

- a) Being Economically Empowered
- b) understanding climate change and SRHR, boys' champion of change for boys and
- c) being informed about SRHR

Under being economically empowered, the youth were trained on the following 9 topics; A Girl's Life, A Girl's Rights, Breaking the cycle, Taking over, Building financial skills, Finding allies, Building a network, Role models like me, and Road maps for our economic future.

In this model, the youth reflected and appreciated the barriers and opportunities girls have for economic success, importance of supporting girls to have a sustainable economic future. *From this engagement, one male youth participant opened a retail shop in Amugu, he said, 'I used to waste my money in drinking and only buying clothes without thinking of economic sustainability but it turned out to be the source of capital'. A female participant is now selling local bread and she intends to expand the sales by adding more products such as tomatoes and silver fish as her capital grows. Another female program participant testified that she has started a poultry project as a way of making money where she decided to join a VSLA group where she is saving and borrowing small loans to sustain her project. One other male program participant also testified that he has realized that he can do something to earn money to improve on his standard of living and he is planning to start selling petrol to motorcyclists and will borrow money from his VSLA group for this investment.*

Understanding climate change and SRHR; in this activity youth were introduced to the general concept of climate change that includes understanding definitions of climate, weather, climate change, causes of climate change, effects and impacts of climate change and the response measures to climate change that includes adaptation and mitigation measures. *The youth committed to start collecting and engaging in waste recycling. The youth have influenced their families to adopt the use of locally modified cook stoves and are preserving the indigenous tree species in the homestead and gardens/land. For example, a female program participant has planted fruit trees (10 seedlings of Oranges) with the support of the father in Obangangeo village, Abongatin Parish Amugu Sub County, Alebtong District.*

The youth were also able to comprehend the nexus of climate change and SRHR where they were able to reflect and brainstorm on relationships between climate change and violence, climate change and gender, building resilience to climate change for continuous access to SRH Services, mapping our community and Becoming a champion of gender equality and climate action. Generally, participants understood about climate change impacts and the link between

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climate change and SRHR. The youth also got to know that climate change affects people differently and the people affected the most are the women and girls compared to male/men. *Through the CoC engagement particularly on climate change, 2 male program participants planted a total of 52 trees seedlings (i.e. pines and fruit trees) as a way of mitigating climate change impacts and the fruit trees will serve as a source of food and nutrition to the family as well as for income generation according to them.*

In boys' champion of change module 3, boys were able to learn about the myth and misconceptions about SRHR, prevention and treatment of STI/STD and HIV/AIDS, contraception, relationships, sexuality, values and rights. The boys and young men realized their roles in promoting gender equality and appreciated that they cannot eliminate gender stereotypes and stereotype about their lives but can lessen its impacts on their lives and on the lives of people around them. The boys understood the different key words and terminologies related to sexuality i.e. STI, FGM, contraception, intimacy, sexual orientation and gender identity among others.

One of our male program participants talked of visiting Amugu health center to check his health status which he said was something exciting to share with the youth to inspire and motivate them because he used not to do. A female program participant aged 18 years said that she is using contraceptive though she used to fear that she may not be able to give birth to children as it has been widely said by many people in the community. Another male program participant now protects his life from STI including HIV/AIDS through consistent and corrective use of condoms, 'I am able to protect my partner from unintended pregnancy', he concluded.

The young people particularly boys appreciated that their values are generally influenced by their surrounding e.g. Culture, therefore they realized the need for them to have accurate information and education about reproduction, sex and sexuality both in schools and out of school. *A female program participant reached out to nearly 200 audiences that included ministers, members of parliament, CSOs/NGOs, development partners, civil servants, media, children and youth with the messages of ending child marriage through story sharing with a call to action during her participation in the 2024 National Girl Summit where she called upon government to ensure access to government programs targeting the youth to build their economic strength.*

The young men/boys appreciated that pornography is not a healthy way of learning about sex and therefore they intend not to depend on it throughout their life.

In being informed about SRHR, girls were trained on the following 3 topics; 1-The right to full and accurate information, where they were able to discuss about the rights to full and accurate

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information about their bodies, reproduction and sexuality. They also discovered that girls have the rights to accurate information and education about reproductions and sexuality. Girls need this information to make informed decision about their sexual and reproductive health. Therefore, it is important to talk about reproductions and sexuality with confidence and using the correct terms. 2-Puberty, where they were able to learn the changes that occur in the early adolescence and late adolescence. The youth appreciated that it is both physical and emotional change during adolescence and every individual experience these changes in a different way and at a different pace and are normal. 3-The reproductive system. The youth learnt different parts and functions of the reproductive systems, how to care about them. They appreciated that Knowing accurate information about their own body strengthens girl's self-awareness and self-esteem. Informed girls are able to understand what their bodies are capable of doing, and to reject myths and misconception that can lead them to harm. 4-Preventing teenage pregnancy why and how? In this activity the participants were able to list reasons why a girl may want to delay or prevent pregnancy based on different types of consequences over their lives. Having the capacity to get pregnant does not mean the teenage girls are physically or emotionally ready to have children. There are many reasons for delaying pregnancies and a variety of contraceptives methods to do so. 5-Preventing STIs, in this session the participants learnt that the girls have the right to protect themselves against STIs. It is very important for girls to know how to protect themselves and their partners against STIs. 6-Being aware of different infections you can get from unprotected or unsafe sexual contact is also important. 7-Our health our lives. In this activity the girls learnt that having correct information about sexual and reproductive health allows girls to make better decisions about their bodies and their health. Following these three steps can help the girls to make good decisions: a) stop and think b) know the facts and c) consider the consequences. Girls have the right to girls' friendly sexual and reproductive health and information services. Knowing where they are and what services they are supposed to provide can help girls to claim this right.

The participants learnt that they all have the right to get pregnant by choice, not by chance or obligation.

They also learnt that teens have rights too and they got to know that being a teen mother creates many barriers for girls but it should never isolate her or prevent her from reaching her potential. It is important for all the girls to have positive attitude towards all her peers including girls who are pregnant or are already mothers.

A male Champion of Change member from Abako Sub County testified to have a girl friend whose health status he didn't know and have been putting him on pressure to have intimate relationship something he feared but after the CoC engagement on boys' champion of change (module 4), he was able to make up his mind, talked to the girl about risks involved in sexual encounter like unwanted pregnancy, STI/STD, HIV/AIDS where she understood and decided to

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use protection (condom). He also added that, both of them didn't know much about teenage pregnancy and STI/STD prevention but now they are aware and are talking to other peers about it.

One male program participant with visual impairment testified that his fellow peers especially those who have been part of the CoC group are treating him with respect unlike before where they used to make fun of him. Furthermore, the community and family members are now helping him. For example, he said, 'I was allowed to attend CoC sessions, given food in time such that I don't miss CoC sessions, I was also allowed to go and test for HIV/AIDS during a community health outreach where my family members escorted me', just like any other human being.

Activity 1.1.1.5 Support CoC Group Activities and Functionality

In order to ensure continued flow of sessions, training materials such as flip charts, masking tapes, marker pens, manila cards and printing papers were provided. These support ensured practical demonstration of topics under discussion and young people ably translated these practices to their real life situation. *For example, 3 youth (2 male and 1 female) reported that at church services, they were able to sensitize young people (approximately more than 20 girls and 15 boys totalling to more than 35 youth receiving the messages) and the entire community (approximately 20+ adults) on the issues related to minimising teenage pregnancy and adapting to innovative ways (for example, use of cook stoves that saves wood fuel energy hence reducing on the number of trees to be cut) of dealing with the current effects of climate change.*

Selected activity photos.

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CoC members attending the sessions on Reproductive Health System in Abongatin Amugu S/Cty.

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CoC training session ongoing in Alanyi paris Abako Sub-county.

Output 1.3: Adolescents and young people, especially adolescent girls most at risk, have skills and increased links to pursue economic opportunities including alternative livelihood opportunities and green solutions.

Progress notes and description of activities carried out.

Activity 1.3.1: Life Skills training through Innovation Hub.

Life Skills training to youth enrolled for vocational/green skills training cohort four 2024.

The activity was conducted from 4th to 27th of November 2024 targeting 20 youth enrolled under the Innovation Hub program.

The purpose of this training was to equip youth with life skills, knowledge on SRHR core topics, climate change and disability inclusion to enable them make decisions about their body and future.

Specific objectives of the training were:

- To create awareness on climate change with main focused on adaptation measures to climate change effects.

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- To train the youth on good life style regarding their health and social relationships with the community.

During the engagement, youth were trained on a number of cards which included; Life skills, Disability inclusion, Climate change, Menstrual health and hygiene, Gender, Reproductive Health Rights, and SRHR services.

A total of 20 youth (10 females and 10 males) underwent training on the different cards under core courses where they actively participated during the training. They participated in different assignments like quizzes, asked questions, participated in discussions and presentations.

The youth trained on information packs learnt what to do, when and why, its impacts on their health. They also understood the importance of this training and learnt different skills under Life skills and SRHR where they testified that they didn't have the skills before. They have promised to start practicing the skills they have learnt in their daily lives.

The youths testified that after training on core courses that their lives have not remained the same, some of them are starting new lives just relaying on the skills gotten from the core courses and they said that they are going to implement it effectively to change their life and the community

During this training, 20 youth (10 females: 10 males) learnt about life skills and topics covered include: Communications, powerful people vs. powerless people, personal rights, records, savings, Budgeting among others

In the business skills training, youth were trained on topics like; What is a business? Profit and Loss).

The overall goal of business skills training was to help young people start-up businesses, or improve their existing businesses, by taking them through core business skills. The youth were able to understand what a business is, how the basic process of buying and selling works. They have started to understand business better by looking at sources and uses of money. Similarly, they have also understood what causes profit and loss, and when it happens.

The youth were taken through the following topics under SRHR (information pack); Relationships, menstrual health and hygiene, contraception, STI/STD prevention and teenage pregnancy *Sexuality, Rights and Values*.

Topics covered under Disability inclusion were; definition of key terms under disability, mainstreaming disability, types/forms of disability, barriers to disability inclusion, myth and misconceptions about disability, stating support to disability.

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Topics covered Gender included; definition of gender, related terms like Gender, sex, gender roles, gender stereotypes and Gender mainstreaming.

Activity 1.3.2: Vocational/Green Skills training through Innovation Hub.

In this quarter 20 youth (10 male and 10 female) were selected and placed for a six month vocational training with 10 male in motorcycle mechanic and 10 female in hairdressing.

The purpose of this training was to empower Children, Adolescents and Youth (CAY) with life skills and livelihood skills, knowledge and inspire them to create solutions to their life challenges in a safe space.

So far, the youth placed under hairdressing were trained on the following; plaiting freehand and plaiting Kiswahili fashion. They also received theoretical training on chemical application procedures, general rules and regulations in hairdressing. Other activities included; hot combing, chemical application-hair setting.

Under Motorcycle mechanic, the youth learnt the workshop rules, trained on names of the different spare parts of a motorcycle, petty repairs and replacement of motorcycle parts i.e. replacing and fixing of motorcycle tyres, changing engine oil, fixing brake and clutch wires among others.

Some of the program participants for example, 2 male and 2 female youth testified that after learning about climate change and renewable energy they are now practicing proper disposal of wastes where they are separating plastic wastes from bio-degradable wastes. One of these male program participants also added that plastic wastes especially plastic bottles, he keeps them when accumulated he sells to dealers and get money but for biodegradable wastes he disposes them to nearby gardens to add nutrients in the soil. Mr. Okello (not real name) also said most times he reuses plastic bottles for other purposes like buying cooking oil, holding water for brushing in the morning among others and he has now become advocates for reduced plastic use within their home and to his fellow peers within the community.

After the training on SRHR, all the 20 youth under Innovation Hub decided to go for STI/STD and HIV/AIDS screening and testing respectively something they testified they feared before joining the program.

Selected activity photos.

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Girls practicing freehand & Kiswahili fashion at a hairdressing workshop from BITNIF-SMC Ltd

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Youth practicing wiring a motorcycle at Kopia Traders Garage, Alebtong Town Council

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Orientation of parents and youth at Innovation Hub; Life skills and Business Skills Training at the Hub

I Decide Project SRHR Coordinator, Plan International taking youth through SRHR Core Topic at Innovation Hub

Outcome 3: Children, adolescents, and youth in all their diversity live in safe and supportive communities that transform gender roles and challenge harmful social and gender norms and stigma around SRHR.

Output 3.2: Parents, caregivers and communities have capacities and positive coping strategies to overcome shocks and stresses.

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Progress note and description of activities carried out.

Activity 3.2.1.1: Parents' Engagement through Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA).

Engagement of parents on building bridges curriculum.

This activity has been a continuation of building bridges curriculum rollout which had commenced on 18th and 26th July, 2024 in Amugu and Abako Sub counties in Alebtong district targeting 60 parents with each location comprising of 30 members organized in VSLA groups in areas where champion of change groups were established.

The purpose of this activity was to empower parents of young adolescents to talk to their children on issues related to sexuality and relationship.

In quarter 4, 2024, two parents' groups i.e. Okany can VSLA (25 participants (19 females: 6 males) and Otio karacel VSLA (25 participants (14 female: 11 males) were trained on the following topics; A.7A consent and sexual abuse and violence, A.7B: How to stay safe online, A.8: How to discuss sensitive issues, A.9: Intergenerational communication, and A.10: How to be a role model in the community with integration of both Climate change and Disability inclusion module.

In this engagement, parents were introduced to gender norms and how they are harmful to the sexual wellbeing of young people (both boys and girls). They understood the significance of sexual consent in the lives of young people, gender based violence and its effects and different forms of sexual abuse and how to safeguard their children from sexual abuses.

Parents learnt the risks and benefits of using different digital platforms like social media, the different types/forms of digital platforms text messages and messaging apps, emails, online chats, social media and how they work. They learnt that their children can be at risk of online abuses from adults and other children they know, or from strangers.

The parents also explored their own values around sexuality and got to feel more comfortable talking about sensitive topics with their children especially adolescents. They were able to unpack sensitive issues like sex, post abortion care and its services, sexual activities, sexual pleasure and sexual rights, sexual health which is vital in communicating and educating young people about sexuality. They also learnt a lot on the issues they should discuss with separate age groups of children when talking about sexuality. They also discovered some of the cultural norms that prevented the parents from discussing certain things to their children mostly things related to sex.

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The parents learnt a lot on gender norms and how they can be harmful to the sexual well-being of both boys and girls.

The parents were able to identify how they can use their knowledge and experience to become role model in the community and advocate for better access to sexuality education. The parents said that they would start moving to other parents including different groups so that the message on parenting an adolescent and sexuality including relationship is able to reach other parents as well.

Parents were also introduced to the concept of climate change where they were able to learn basics of climate change for example, the causes, effects/impacts and adaptations and mitigation measures. They were able to reflect and relate effects of climate change on SRHR of young people and how they can reduce it.

Parents also learnt about disability inclusion where they appreciated the different types of disability and how they can help PWDs, the rights of PWDs, myth and misconceptions about disability and how to combat it.

They realized that they have been discriminating PWDs and those who have been close to them are not giving enough support due to limited knowledge about disability.

Engaging parents on building bridges will help parents and young people to develop and cement positive sexuality and relationships where the young people will be able to make informed decisions about their body as this is becoming very promising in creating label grounds for a supportive and safe environment.

As a result of parents' engagement in building bridges curriculum, Parents were able to form themselves into groups to talk to other parents and adolescents through VSLA groups and other fora about positive sexuality-SRHR and its importance. Each group composed of at least a leader (LCI, VHT, Cultural leader, Religious Leader) where they demystified misconceptions about SRHR and advised the community (parents and youth) to support the adolescents to access SRH services like contraceptives, condoms, STD and HIV testing. Some parents like Akello (not real name) aged 42 years from Amugu Sub County from within group have encouraged her girl children to use contraceptives to avoid issues of teenage pregnancy.

Acan (not real name) 38 years old a parent to Odongo (not real name), narrated that her S2 child used to come home late, feared her as a parent but after the engagement on Building bridges, she learnt skills and tactics to approach her son to discuss issues of sexuality. She said one day she engaged her son into the conversation regarding his late coming home where the son admitted to be watching movies in the video halls, accepted to be taken to health facility for STI screening and HIV testing. She took the child to Amugu Health Centre III and after testing

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she requested the health worker to give him condoms for protection where the son admitted that he has some packets of condoms at home but later accepted to carry more for future use. She said now the child is free with her, they discuss SRHR issues freely and the boy has now completely changed and is supporting even in house chores unlike before.

A3.2.1.2: Provision of VSLA kits

This activity was conducted on 18th/12/2024 targeting a total of 60 parents in both Alanyi and Abongatin parishes of Abako and Amugu Sub Counties respectively.

The purpose of this activity was to support parents' VSLA groups to build a resilient community through developing positive coping strategies to overcome shocks and stresses from climate change.

In this activity, two groups in the names of Okany can VSLA and Otio karacel VSLA were supported with 5 plastic chairs and 4 packets of drought resistant and fast growing/maturing maize seeds to adapt the effects of unreliable weather changes prior for planting period.

Parents appreciated the support given to their groups and testified that through their group management they will always save and apportion profits to support special initiatives of the groups for example developing a group income generating activity where they will be learning from and practicing the knowledge at their homestead level.

Male engagement sessions

The male champion was able to complete the module with one male engagement group of 21 members in Amugu Sub County. Previously it was very possible that men would send their pregnant wives to the health facilities without according them a helping hand although through this male engagement particularly for this group, *some men embraced the greater role in achieving gender equality, promoting health seeking behaviors for example, Denis the male champion narrated that two of his group members developed the courage to escort their wives for family planning services and antenatal care.*

Selected activity photos.



Member of Okany can Parents' VSLA group in group discussion during build bridges session in Abako Sub County.

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A member of Otio Karacel Parents' VSLA group presenting during build bridges session in Amugu Sub County.

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Members during a session on how to discuss sensitive issues with their children, Otio Karacel Parents' VSLA group in Amugu Sub County.

Outcome 4: Children, adolescents, and youth in all their diversity participate and benefit from a vibrant civil society that advocates for increased public investment and improved SRHR policy and promotes equality for and agency of girls.

Output 4.1: CSOs have improved their capacity to influence ASRHR and gender equality for CAY in all their diversity and advocate for their rights.

Progress notes and description of activities carried out.

Activity 4.1.1 Annual Climate Change reflection meeting by ACTADE.

Participated in Annual Climate Change Reflection meeting

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CLASS participated in the annual Reflection meeting that was organized by ACTADE from 12th -13th December 2024 In Kayegi hotel Mbale targeting all the partner organizations implementing I Decide project to reflect on the progress made during the year 2024. Other organizations that participated include; SCOT, AYUA Uganda, NYE, DREF, GCU, LAYDNET, LIDUPED, FOG, CDSU, GDI, HOSSANA community bridge, RHU, CDFU, SAFE AID, Global Youth Foundation.

Objectives of the reflection meeting were to:

- Reflect on experiences and progress made towards integrating climate change resilience.
- Harvest achievements related to the integration of climate resilience
- Reflect on the overall project performance for 2024.

The project performance was presented by Mr. Tonny Ogwang the Regional Technical Specialists for Sexual Reproductive Health Rights who hinted on the SRHR 8 core topics that is to say: Safe abortion, CSE (Sexuality education and building the bridges), contraception, sexuality, disability inclusion, climate change, sex, rights (sexual rights and reproductive rights) and encouraged the participants to know the in depth of the topics.

The meeting was participatory in nature and participants were able to reflect and rate themselves (using strength wheels and Evaluation Tree) based on the different topic i.e. climate change, sexuality, disability inclusion, sexuality, sex, rights among others and they encourage the participants to exchange the paper and ask the partner who rated themselves high or low.

Most of the participants admitted that they are not yet on top because they still need support like capacity building on the areas of climate change and SRHR.

The participants were also able to link and identify the category of people that are affected most by climate change impacts.

During the reflection meeting participants were also able to discuss achievements and challenges they met during the implementation of field activities and among them were the knowledge increment on SRHR and climate change among the youth and parents, adaptive measures people are using in the community to adapt to climate change impact. Challenges that were encountered included; high expectations in the community, social events like burials and marriage ceremonies including market days that affected the training mostly building bridges sessions.

The participants testified that they have observed knowledge improvement in parents as a result of building bridges engagement and also the commitment of parents to support their children in accessing SRHR services. *From this meeting CLASS staff came up with action points to improve on the implementation of I Decide project moving forward and these included; brainstorm on interventions to sustain the gains from capacity buildings provided by ACTADE in the areas of climate change, building on the commitment and experiences of the staffs and*

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established structures (CoC groups, Parents VSLA groups, Male Engagement groups and the innovation hub) in the community, refresher training of staff members on the 8 SRHR Core Topics (this include; Safe abortion, CSE/cards and building bridges, contraception, sexuality, disability inclusion, climate change, sex and Rights) in order to make them resonate with the topics, enforce the process of timely inputting the required data in the Activity Tracker, ensure the process of gathering and submission of advocacy issue logs to ACTADE every quarter, identification of youth who have integrated climate change actions into their daily lives to be role models so as to inspire and motivate other youth, more focus to unpack climate change adaptation measures for staffs and youth since it is what I Decide project is measuring not mitigation measures, outsource or request technical support towards understanding KAPs (Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices) particularly how to measure or determine from participants by the field team, to facilitate Innovation Officer and Project M&E Officer to trace and profile all the youth who completed the 6 month training period in order to ascertain their employment status right from cohort one to cohort 3. (2023-2024), we need to create practical linkages/connection with other opportunities for youth to have platforms to exhibit and show case or share stories for learning in order to empower our program participants to be able to articulate some of these positive coping mechanisms/mechanisms and resilience, increase the participation of youth with disabilities and girls/women in our advocacy processes, ensure SMART objectives when using various approaches to engage the same program participants with clear set indicators and how to measure/track.

Annual Partnership reflection meeting organized by Plan International

CLASS participated in the annual partnership reflection meeting organized by Plan International targeting Project Team (M&E, POs and EDs) from different projects thus I Decide, SHEA, SHELEAD, Rising, SHE-LEADS and RAC. Staffs (PIU/partners), representative from National NGO forum and C4C (charter for change) facilitated by Dorcus Alicai Adrale the Partnership Manager and Zaituna Asio the Regional Manager, Plan International.

The objectives of the meeting were to;

1. Share the current trend regarding partnerships at Plan International level and Plan International's vision of partnerships.
2. Reflect on the partnership principals and review the progress on implementation of the partnership agreements.
3. Agree on plans on how to strengthen Plan International building better partnerships with its current partners and those in the future projects.
4. Identify lessons that have been learnt in the financial year ending, best practices and take note of those that can be documented and share with other country offices and global headquarter.
5. Respond to challenges faced during the partnerships.

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During the meeting, the Partnership Manager-Plan International briefed participants about the different stakeholders in the partnership i.e. the government and the different Implementing Partners and donors. She emphasized that this engagement (annual partnership reflection meeting) is very important in ensuring sustainability of the different partner organizations especially the district based partners and CBOs through strengthening their systems among others. She added that for the case of better partnership Plan International is focusing more on women and youth led organizations or youth and women focused organizations. The Partnership manager also added that currently partners that Plan International is working with are quite many and are planning on reducing and are looking for a few who are credible and can do more instead of the numbers. Capacity strengthening to the partners to back up the localization approach of project/program implementation. Capacity strengthening will also reduce dependency on donor funds that are becoming tight every day through diversifying their strategies of resource mobilization. She also presented Annual partnership report as below:

24 of the partners working with Plan International were registered as CBO, 16 national level civil society organization, 5 registered as network, 1 International NGO. Number of years most organizations had worked with Plan International ranged between 2-5 years and that shows confidence in Plan International. Plan International is upgrading their partnership level engagement with its partners so as to reduce dependency tendencies on Plan International. This would also reduce the struggle in managing relationships with the donors that had always reflected in delayed fund transfer due to bureaucratic processes.

Thematic areas that Plan International was partnering with other implementing partners included; SRHR with 89%, Gender and Inclusion, Civil Society Strengthening, Climate Change, Youth as Active Drivers of Change, SOYEE, and Early Childhood Development.

Feedback about the partnership report/validation of partnership report was done through group discussion where members participated actively. Results presented included:

- ✓ Compliance with the localization agenda for C4C-Plan International.
- ✓ The identity of the International NGOs needs to be disclosed.
- ✓ Recommended involvement of government officials, Plan International should organize a face-to-face meeting to get feedback on how the project is being implemented on the ground especially from the RDC offices.
- ✓ SRHR-success stories from RHU and ELEGO which were not recognized by Plan International, they called upon Plan International to recognize efforts of the partners in whatever they are doing in the different platforms they have, this will increase visibility of partners and as well encourage them to keep the good work up/motivation but also attract more partnership.
- ✓ -Be intentional in budgeting for conducting research for advocacy. The research would support or give basis for advocacy such that advocacy is done for/on the right issues.

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- ✓ Financial support should be increased to 30%.
- ✓ There should be improvement on communication and as well strengthen the communication systems of the respective partners to ensure that project implementation is as effective as possible.
- ✓ Once in a while Plan International makes unnecessary demands especially when there are late disbursements which is a big risk in achieving results. It impedes with the quality of results since activities are done under too much pressure giving room to so many errors.
- ✓ Problems have been discussed and presented but Plan International have rarely worked on them for example, the issue of late disbursement of funds.
- ✓ Invest more in strengthening partners logistical and administrative capacity.
- ✓ Plan International should be more flexible.
- ✓ Reasons for older partners being dropped include among others mismanagement of funds.
- ✓ Most organizations have few funding sources that's why the staffing level is low and are not able to hire the required expertize to do the job.
- ✓ Experience- Plan International built capacity of most partners.
- ✓ Financial support should be on a case-by-case basis due to the varying capacity of the different partners.
- ✓ Finance people want more focused support through routine support visits and capacity building.
- ✓ Plan International should consider insurance for staffs at partner level because the salaries are quite small for them to cover such burdens.
- ✓ Recommendations to Plan International and to partners.
- ✓ Increased support to partner finance team by Plan International technical team since its significant in resource mobilization, decision making and determining success of the project implementation.
- ✓ Research to support advocacy especially on sexual and reproductive health.
- ✓ Engagement of government and local leaders for them to give feedback on impacts of the projects.
- ✓ -CBOs should have a sustainability plan and Plan International should help back them up through capacity building.
- ✓ -CBOs to update their registration status at all levels to ensure legitimacy especially during this period approaching elections/compliance issues.
- ✓ -Partners should be careful while selecting the board members. They should appoint boards that are capable to execute their roles effectively.

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Other presenters included the representative of Uganda National NGO forum that highlighted on resource mobilization citing the best 15 NGOs around the world that could be a potential donor; Plan International, Save the children, Oxfam International, Doctors without Borders, world vision, International Rescue Committee, Catholic Relief Service, Danish Refugee Council, Care International, Amnesty International, Action Aid, Direct Relief, Action Against Hunger, Antislavery International.

The participants were also able to brainstorm on what is it that we can do to make us ready as NGO? This included; team work, clear vision and mission that guides their operation, financial monitoring, accountability and diversified funding, good operation climate and government support, strategic partnership, reputation and networking, impact creation and visibility, donor compliance and result oriented summaries into five principals that is to say credibility, legitimacy, accountability, service orientedness and power-based (CLASP).

NGO forum emphasised on new approach of funding through Localization where funds are given directly to local actors where they can operate and implement directly on their ground or in communities. This was based on the fact that the funds given to most International organizations were doing so little on the ground

Reasons for refusal to localize included;

- ✓ Capacity.
- ✓ Accountability.
- ✓ Trust.

Action points generated during the annual partnership reflection meeting.

- Plan International to give checklist for requirements need to facilitate fund transfer prior to the process.
- More capacity building by Plan International to partners on resource mobilization/fund raising and enhanced linkages to resources mobilization.
- Self-reflection by partners on issues of accountability/performance.
- All concept notes should have safeguarding risk matrices.

Output 4.2: Policymakers and decision-makers at local and/or national level (government/ministries/local bureaus of education, health, and social affairs) have improved understanding of CSE, AYFS and ASRHR.

Progress notes and description of activities carried out.

Sub County Leaders' Engagement.

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This activity was organized on 17/12/2024 by CLASS together with the youth targeting local leaders of Abako Sub County Alebtong District. A total of 20 youth participated i.e. 8 female and 12 males.

The purpose of this activity was to help youth identify and present to the leaders issue they are facing within their communities.

Specific objectives of the activity were;

- To discuss with community leaders/stakeholders on challenges they are facing as young people that are denying them the right to a decent living.
- Together with the leaders, the young people propose solutions or interventions to cab down the challenges.
- To generate action points and draft a work plan regarding the different interventions proposed.

This activity was conducted in phases and it commenced with issue identification on 17/09/2024 and after meeting the Local Leaders in Abako Alebtong District.

Based on the Issue identified” Low productivity of the youth due to unemployment”, the youth were able to present their concerns to the Sub County leaders. The youth were able to cite the “low productivity of the youth” is the major issue they are facing in Abako Sub County.

According to the youth of Alanyi parish they said it is attributed to climate change effect given the fact that majority of the youth depend on subsistence rain fed agriculture where they get food and the surplus sold to provide basic needs like medication (SRH services and others), clothing, among others.

They also claimed that the issues are fuelled by lack of employable skills and lack of start-up capital/resources to acquire the necessary skills that they can embark on to earn a living and resources to start businesses as a way of diversifying income sources.

They added that climate change evidenced by unreliable weather changes has led to total crop failure making them to engage in risky behaviours like drug abuse due to stress, exchange of sex for money and material things especially with the girls, early marriage on the side of girls expecting easy life since they hope that their husbands will provide for them, gambling-playing cards for money especially on market days among others. This has led to increased teenage pregnancy, high spread of STI/STDs and HIV/AIDS and recurring poverty at large. The youth said that failure of crop yields has affected their health nutrition wise as well as their SRHR since they can no longer afford the SRH services.

The youth also said that they have not received any assistance from the local government even when they are organized in groups.

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They also testified that they do not know about the knowledge on the running government community development programs like Parish Development Model (PDM). Other programs they have not benefited from included youth livelihood funds that they heard are very difficult to access as a result of bureaucracy involved in the processes.

Action points generated were;

- The CDO pledged to liaise with CLASS to sensitize the youth on the different community development programs and on how youth can exploit the opportunities to improve on their livelihood.
- The CDO together with the LCIII of Abako Sub County also pledged to organize with CLASS to visit the respective youth groups and support them to register.

The Sub County leaders also pledged to make a field visit to the different youth groups and have more discussions with the different group members to validate the information provided by the youth in order to better understand and help them out.

Advocacy led by youth in Amugu Sub County

The meeting was organized by the youth supported by CLASS on 16/12/2024 at Amugu Sub County targeting Sub County leaders.

The objective of the meeting was:

- To front youth to discuss their SRHR needs with their leaders.
- To give feedback on status of SRHR information and service delivery within the Sub County (both in communities and health center).
- To create space for reflection, listening and exchange of ideas between young people, health workers and leaders regarding their health and SRHR in general.
- To develop action points regarding the discussion between the youth and the leaders.

During the meeting 10 youth (5 male, 5 female) and 4 Sub County leaders (3 males and 1 female) participated with support from CLASS.

The meeting was interactive where the young people were given the opportunity to discuss openly with the leaders considering the problems that is affecting them in the community and among the problems they listed were:

1. The long distance from their community to the health center that is Amugu health center IV that is making it hard for them to access services.
2. Bad roads to health centers.

The bad roads have resulted to high transport cost since they had to abandoned the short cuts and used long routes that are easily accessible given the fair conditions. The youth pointed out the high transportation costs that is limiting their ability to access the services. The long distance from Abongatin parish to Amugu health center is very far limiting them from accessing

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the sexual reproductive health services because they don't have any income generating activity apart from relying on agriculture and of which is for the family not their own.

In the meeting, participants and leaders agreed that addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive approach such as provision of mobile health clinics to help them in the community since some of them do not have the money to facilitate themselves to the health facility.

- Construction of health facility nearer to help them since Amugu health center is very far from them and it makes it hard to get the services.

- Training of VHTs so that they can test for different types of infections and prescribe treatment for them from the community.

The young people were very happy because they were given the opportunity to discuss the problem affecting them openly and the leaders too were happy that they decided to take action by following them to their offices.

Action points

The Sub County chief pledge that he will make a follow up on the issue of bringing the services nearer to the young people so that they can have the services they need.

He also responded to the issue of distance to the health facility that they have requested for the health center but it may take long so he can talk to the health workers so that they can be doing community health outreach to bridge the gap.

Selected activity photos.

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Presentation on partnership and organization sustainability by Country Director (online), PIU at Margarita Lira City



Presentation on networking (C4C) and Group five presentation on partnership report validation

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I Decide Project Partners during Climate change reflection meeting organized by ACTADE in Mbale

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Our youth advocate sharing her story during the National Girls' Summit at Hotel Africana, Kampala

CLASS participated the following activities during quarter four (October to December, 2024) mainly with funding support from Networks (such as National Coalition of Human Rights Defenders Uganda, West Nile Region CSO Network, Alebtong District Local Government, Girls Not Bride Uganda);

Output 1.1: Increased Collaboration and networking.

Progress notes and description of activities carried out.

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Participation in District Budget Conference Alebtong District Local Government

The participants' category were Development partners that is to say (CLASS, PIU, SNV, YOUTH ALIVE, USAID) Religious leaders, RDC, LCV chairperson, council members, CAO, All heads of Department Alebtong District Local Government.

Objectives of the budget conference for the year 2025/2026.

- To get feedback on what transferred in the last financial year.
- Discuss priorities for the next financial year.

The keynote address by the district chairperson

Theme: Full monetarization of Uganda's economy through commercial agriculture, industrialization, expanding and broadening services, digital transformation, and market Access.

The district chairperson in his communication appreciated the development partners for the unwavering support in areas such as health, education, infrastructure, agriculture and community empowerment which has created transformative impact in our communities.

He emphasized on the vital role of agroforestry and perennial crops in Alebtong district which integrate trees with crops and livestock are crucial for improving soil health, conserving water, and providing shades all of which enhance the resilience and productivity of our farming systems.

Promoting diverse household income. In addition to perennial crops, embracing other income generating enterprise is essential for improving the livelihood of our communities. Poultry farming, goat rearing cattle keeping, bee keeping and aquaculture all holds significant potential to lift households out of poverty and reduce reliance on single source of income.

Key learning points to adopt from the visit that chairperson went to In Hyderabad, India.

Water resource management.

Effective models for sub national water policies and mechanisms that ensure sustainable water use for agriculture, by adapting similar practices Alebtong can boost productivity especially in our drought prone areas.

Technological adaption. ICRISAT showcased digital tools to soil health monitoring and crop management, incorporating such tools can help our farmers make informed decisions that increase yields and reduce losses.

Market linkages. The focus on direct market access for smallholder farmers in India inspired strategies we can implement to connect our farmers directly with markets, increasing their income and reducing exploitation by intermediaries.

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These insights align with our agenda of commercial Agriculture, Digital transformation, and market access. By implementing these lessons, we can elevate the productivity of Alebtong's agricultural sector and contribute meaningfully to Uganda's vision of economic monetization.

Key areas of focus for the 2024/2025 budget.

In line with our theme, our budget priorities will focus on key sectors essential to Alebtong's transformation.

Integrated transport infrastructure and services.

Infrastructure remains the cornerstone for growth. Investing in integrated transport system, including roads and rural transport facilities, will improve access to markets, health services and education. This is critical for facilitating commerce and expanding market access for agricultural produce.

Human capital development.

We must prioritize education and health to empower our people. This includes not only building schools and health facilities but also ensuring they are equipped with resources and skilled personnel. Special focus will be placed on reducing school dropouts' rates, improving retention for the girl child, and enhancing technical and vocational training for youth to create a skilled labor force.

Sustainable housing and urban development.

As Alebtong continues to grow, so does the need for structured urban development. We will work towards sustainable housing solutions and develop urban centers that are well-planned, environmentally friendly, and conducive for business and community life.

Agro industrialization.

The backbone of Alebtong's economy is Agriculture, and Agro industrialization will be a primary driver for monetizing it. We plan to invest in facilities for value addition to packaging, like processing plants for oil seeds crops like sunflower, groundnuts, maize, bananas, cassava, fruits, milk and products like honey, animal feeds among others. This approach will help farmers obtain higher returns, expand markets and increase local employment.

Private sector development.

A thriving private sector is vital for our districts economic growth. We will continue supporting local businesses through access to credit, capacity building and creating an enabling environment for small and medium enterprises.

Tourism development.

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Alebtong holds untapped tourism potential. This budget will explore initiatives to market and develop the districts unique cultural and natural attractions, contributing to local income and preserving our heritage.

Natural resources, climate change and land management.

Our commitment to sustainable land use and environmental conservation remains paramount. Initiatives will include tree planting, soil conservation, and sensitizing communities on climate-resilient farming techniques. Effective land management policies will also be key to resolving conflicts and promoting sustainable land use.

Sustainable energy development.

Expanding access to affordable, sustainable energy is essential for economic activities, especially in remote areas. We aim to promote renewable energy sources, such as solar power, to support schools, health centers, and small businesses, reducing reliance on expensive and environmentally harmful alternatives.

Public sector transformation

To serve our people effectively must strengthen our public sectors efficiency, transparency and accountability, digitalization of services and capacity building for public servants will be prioritized to deliver faster more efficient services to our community.

Governance and security.

Security and good governance are indispensable for development. We will continue to strengthen our local governance structures, promote transparency and enhance the security of our communities. This will be achieved through collaboration with law enforcement agencies and community-based policing initiatives.

CLASS presented on the achievements for the year 2024 in Abako and Amugu Sub County as below;

8 groups that were established and 240 youth trained using champion of change methodology (240 participants, 120 male and 120 female youth aged 15-24 years) on SRHR & Gender equality.

Engaging both boys and girls in CoC training has helped young people to reflect on and challenge negative gender norms that are inflicted upon by the different culture; three boys from Alanyi parish Abako sub county testified that today they are actively cooking and helping in home chores something they looked at as duties for girls/women.

The SRHR outreach that was Conducted targeting adolescents and youth in Obangangeo village, Abongatin parish Amugu sub county and Aconyobo village (Alanyi primary school),

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Alanyi parish Alebtong District respectively by Reproductive Health Uganda supported by CLASS mobilization.

164 participants accessed the SRH service i.e. 93 females and 71 males (71 participants-30 males: 41 females in Abako, 93 participants-41 males: 52 females in Amugu).

Challenges that were raised during the conference included:

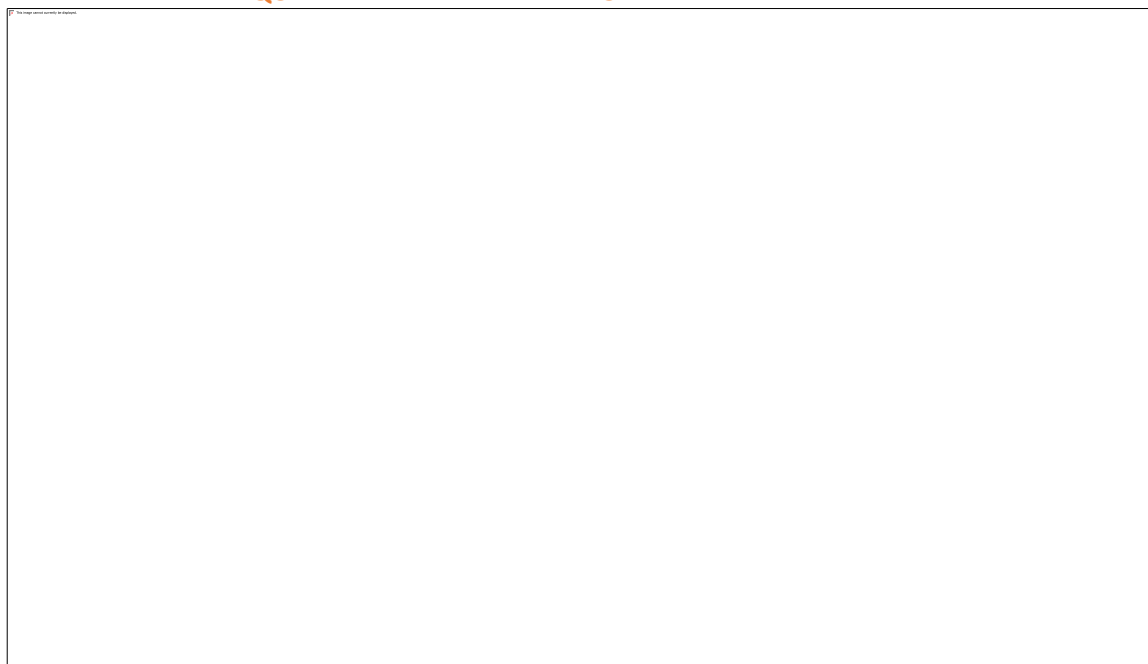
- a) The staffs are not enough from all the departments.
- b) Inadequate funding for development projects (all departments)
- c) Inadequate staff accommodation
- d) Frequent stock out of medicine and medical supplies.
- e) Weak farmer organizations and poor market access for farm produce.
- f) Lack of physical development plans for growth centers.
- g) Weak enforcement of the physical planning regulations at lower council.
- h) Some of the roads are in very bad state and not being considered.
- i) The partners are not sharing with the district the reports and deliverables with the prices they have given to the community.

Recommendations.

- ✓ All capital development must be approved by physical planning and building committees
- ✓ Establishment of the sub county physical planning committees.
- ✓ More staffs should be added.
- ✓ Construction of the staff's accommodations is paramount.
- ✓ The roads committee should start considering consulting before the road is worked on so that they can start with the one in a sorrowful state.
- ✓ All the partners to share all the deliverables they have given to the community with their prices so that the district can tract and incorporate in their system.

Selected Activity photos.

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CLASS Staff participating during the Budget conference organized by Alebtong DLG, Council hall.

Learnings.

- Inadequate knowledge on SRHR by parents to support their children especially during adolescence. Most parents testified that they believed exercising control and dominance on their children as a way of protecting them from harm (child abuse, teenage pregnancy and many more) taking 100% decisions on how their children should live their lives neglecting the fact of empowering them to make informed decisions regarding their SRH.
- Most parents lack knowledge on positive parenting and are not aware of its significance in nurturing sexuality and relationships among young people.
- Myth and misconceptions about SRHR services is still manifesting in the community of Alanyi parish were some of the youth and parents still believe that contraceptive has adverse effects in the lives of young people that includes barrenness in females, production of disabled children among others.
- As a facilitator, it is important to have parents talk to their children about sex and sexuality because it creates good relation between the parents and children.

Challenges encountered during the quarter.

- ✓ High expectation by both parents and their children regarding the champion of change engagement. Parents and youth expected material gains or tangible items like goats, pigs among others. This has led to high level of drop outs of CoC members from the

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champion of change clubs where even some of the parents were stopping their children from attending the training sessions.

- ✓ Poor time management and absenteeism due to unpredictable weather changes and social events like burials hence affecting attendance of CoC sessions.
- ✓ The existing CoC groups being far combined with bad roads that demands more fuel to facilitate field officers.
- ✓ The completion rates for some CoC groups have been very low due to some youth joining innovation hub program before CoC session completion. For example, during this period only 33 youth out of 120 youth enrolled successfully completed the training cycle in Alanyi Parish Abako Sub County.

Recommendations.

The youth who crossed from the CoC groups in Abako Sub County to benefit from the innovation hub program were 10, therefore, it would be prudent if the youth are first given time to complete the CoC modules and qualify to be enrolled for the green/vocational skill development training program. As CLASS we have learned of this issue and take it very seriously. We will continue to watch over such matters thoroughly and will take appropriate action and prevent future occurrences by ensuring that the youth first complete the sessions prior to joining the innovation hub program.

There is need to for CLASS to map out partners working in some thematic areas that addresses some of these expectations and link program participants to benefit from it including government programs like PDM. Additionally, CLASS should integrate economic empowerment support for the community in order to strengthen community resilience.

CLASS program team to intensify home visit to follow up and solicit parents support towards their children participation in the sessions and other related activities.

Compiled by: Akello Nancy, Program Manager

Date 31/12/2024 **Sign:**

Checked by: Omara Moses, Executive Director

Date 07/01/2025 **Sign:**

Reviewed and approved by: Assoc. Prof. Mary Ejang, Board of Director

Date 22/01/2025 **Sign:**