

UGANDA

Kanyacheli Community Foundation

History and current situation

Kanyacheli Community Foundation is a registered non-profit organization located in Kampala, Uganda, East Africa, with a key mission to improve the quality of life among impoverished rural and urban communities. Kanyacheli Community Foundation does not directly engage in development activities, but the foundation provides small grants to non-government organizations (NGOs) and local communities who implement viable community projects. In general, Kanyacheli Community Foundation serves three main audiences: the community as a whole, the non-profit sector, and donors. The primary mission of this foundation is mirrored in its constitution and mission statement, which were articulated in 2004.

The idea of starting a community foundation in Uganda was first inspired by Ms. Maggie I. Jaruzel of the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. I was on a flight from Detroit, Michigan to St. Louis when I sat next to Maggie. That was towards the end of April 2004. During the flight we talked about several issues and one of them was starting a community foundation. The goal of starting a community foundation was to provide seed money in the form of grants to our impoverished community in Uganda. Maggie later introduced me to Mr. Chris Mkhize, CEO of the Uthungulu Community Foundation in South Africa. Chris also warned us that starting a community foundation takes plenty of time. Going by the little experience of starting one in Uganda, we now completely agree with him. We hope we can get there sooner rather than later.

Kanyacheli Community Foundation was tentatively registered in May 2005, but ran into some funding difficulties, as well as logistical problems because of the general elections that were held in February 2006. We later reenergized the community foundation and started with the mobilization of communities after the hectic 2005–2006 electioneering period.

We are currently pursuing three key goals.

- First, we are planning on a site visit to the Uthungulu Community Foundation in South Africa;
- Second, we are interesting donors to support our community foundation's activities;
- Third, we are organizing and training teachers and women in three districts (Kampala, Kayunga, and Mbarara).

In the past two years, our community foundation has been partially active. Members were recruited, but due the lack of funds we were unable to meet our targets. However, I have encouraged the other members of the staff and founders to continue with recruitment and mobilization. We are taking a go-slow approach to build relevant grassroots organizational structures and membership. We also wish to get a strong commitment from a donor to support some of our activities in the short to medium period. We believe this will revitalize hopes and dreams among the membership of Kanyacheli Community Foundation.

We have planned a series of meetings with the following people in our communities of interest (COI) starting with Mbarara District in Uganda.

- NGO & local community representatives
- Local government representatives
- Business representatives

- Other community influential people

It is our considered opinion that community foundations offer incredible opportunities to emancipate our African communities from abject poverty and disease. We also know that a lot of work needs to be done in educating our masses to move away from expecting aid all the time. We anticipate that we will create unique opportunities, which can sustain our rapidly evolving communities in the not too distant future. Most importantly, we need to encourage and promote positive attitudes among our impoverished communities regarding life and enormous opportunities that surround them. By expanding this foundation, we hope to facilitate our impoverished communities to realize their full potential.

We are the only community foundation in Uganda, and welcome any suggestions and comments from other community foundations.

Operations and staffing

Founder Members:

1. Tonny J. Oyana, PhD, tjoyana@siu.edu
2. Mrs. Damalie M. Oyana, OyanaDM@cdm.com
3. Mrs. Florence Makada Ssempebwa, F.Makada@ug.motorcare.com
4. Mr. Charles Nuwagaba, charlesnuwagaba@yahoo.com
5. Mrs. Alice Karamuzi Kaboyo, bainelice@yahoo.com

Staff:

1. National Program Coordinator, Mr. George Erisat erisatgm@yahoo.com
2. Media Relations, Mr. Paul Mugenyi PMugenyi@faulu.com
3. District Liaison Officer and Treasurer, Michael Mugenyi mikemugenyi@yahoo.co.uk

Community Foundation Income

Income

Each of the founding members contributes Shs 1,000,000 for the annual budget for operations, totalling Shs. 25,000,000. That equals US \$13,900 at a rate of one US dollar for Shs. 1,800.

Purposes

Target group: We are focusing on registering teachers and women so that we may support them in entrepreneurial development and the processing of value-added agricultural products. From this beginning, we hope to expand the base group.

Environment for philanthropy

Local attitudes

Local giving has been in the traditions of most cultures in Uganda. What is new, however, is the giving to support community needs or investment goals. I personally believe that sustained financial resources for a community foundation must be generated locally. The generosity of local community philanthropy should not be overstated, but at times community philanthropists have a giving fatigue syndrome.

Current challenges and future developments

At present, we are targeting local support, conducting fund raising initiatives, and using this as an inventory for building a local database of local donors and support. In the near future, we intend to write funding proposals to external donors. We will probably focus on three to five reliable donors to support some of our activities.

Correspondent: Dr. Tonny J. Oyana, Founding Member, Kanyacheli Community Foundation