

RESTORING SOCIAL FUNCTIONALITY

ANNUAL REPORT 2017



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WHO WE ARE

Advance Afrika is a registered not-for-profit non-governmental organisation which aims at contributing to a safe and free society that upholds the dignity of every person. We seek innovative approaches to creating sustainable sources of livelihood in order to foster resilience among vulnerable people and social justice in the region.

We work with vulnerable youth, including, but not limited to, prison inmates and ex-inmates whom we assist by supporting them with knowledge and skills to seek work, develop decent enterprises and/or expand their already existing businesses. At the same time, we promote relationships between citizens and authorities in order to improve reciprocal understanding and trust.

OUR VISION

A safe and free society where young people live with dignity and realise their full potential.

OUR MISSION

We address the root causes of vulnerability by developing opportunities for economic empowerment and transforming the social functionality of communities.

OUR WORK

- Community engagement for transformation and peace-building
- Rehabilitation, reformation and reintegration of offenders
- Creation of employment opportunities
- Skill-building of vulnerable individuals to support workplace success
- Advocacy and communication for changed systems, policies and mindsets

OUR VALUES

Courageous leadership: In Advance Afrika we are leaders of change. We are courageous in tackling difficult challenges; we boldly inspire, innovate and break new ground. We are quick to explore new ways of doing things, learn and grow; and we influence others to do the same.

Passion: We are all committed to making a difference. We want to transform the lives of vulnerable people, adding lasting value to our society. This means that we care deeply about achieving a positive impact – we are engaged, results-focused, and deliver our promises.

Appreciation: We respect and value all whom we work with. We seek to recognise and affirm each other's differing gifts and insights, celebrating diversity. We champion human dignity. We are optimistic, behaving kindly and respectfully; in times of conflict we seek to reconcile different interests.

Professionalism: We aim for high standards of quality and excellence in all that we do, seeking to discover and deliver best practice. We are disciplined, honest, accountable and transparent so that we build trust with our stakeholders. We are good stewards of the resources entrusted to us, aiming to give value for money.

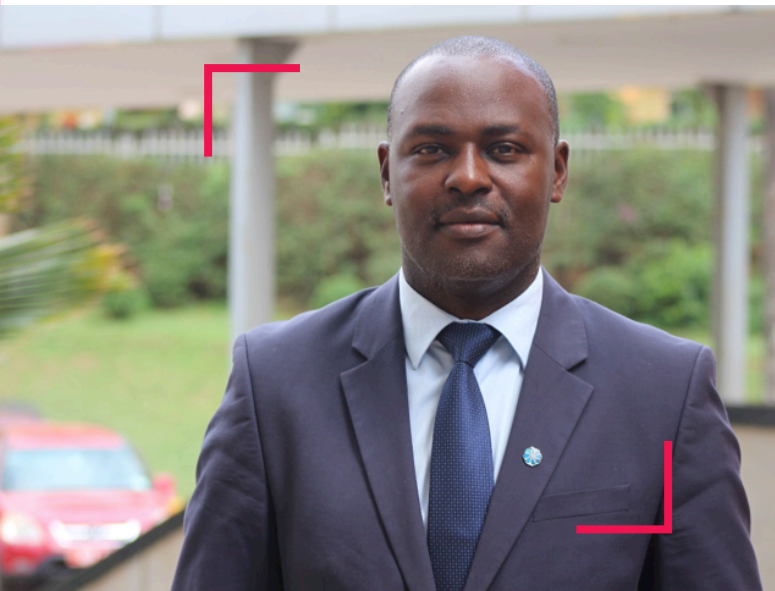


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Chief Executive Officer's Foreword



GREETINGS FROM ADVANCE AFRIKA!

I am honored to present to you our 2017 Annual Report for the year ended 31st December 2017. On my own behalf and on behalf of everyone at Advance Afrika, I present this report as a tool of accountability to our partners, donors, stakeholders and the general public.

For us, 2017 was another year of positive and significant change. Due to the widespread need for our work, we ventured into West Nile sub-region where we piloted an intervention "The Socio-economic Empowerment of Female Inmates in West Nile Project" to address the challenges that female prison inmates face in the course of serving their sentences. The one year project was funded by Caritas Switzerland and TechnoServe and it operated in three prison units namely:- Arua Main, Arua Women and Koboko Prisons respectively. Our signature project "The Economic Empowerment and Social Reintegration of Ex-prison Inmates in Lango and Acholi sub-region" also expanded from 26 prison units in 2016 to 28 in 2017 enabling us to cover all the prison units in Lango and Acholi Sub-region. We empowered 716 youth prison inmates with Entrepreneurship and lifeskills, reintegrated 315 youth ex-prison inmates, supported 306 youth ex-prison inmates with startup kits, supported three in prison projects, constructed two day care centers, established an in prison music band as well as engaged several communities in public dialogues.

As a young and learning organisation, we opened our doors to partnerships to enable us have meaningful impact in our areas of operation as well as across borders. Our partnership with AGEH, a German based catholic development organisation which support local organisations in developing countries by sending additional human resource for capacity development has had several ripple effects among them the Victim Offender Relationship Project, Conflict Transformation Trainings, an in-prison band as well as a band for vulnerable youths including ex-prison inmates in Gulu. We also partnered with Center for Legal Assistance, a Malawi non-governmental organisation under a FK Norway exchange project where we exchanged staff members between the two organisations. Regarding our work with Uganda Prisons Service, we plan to spear head the formation a loose coalition of all CSO's working in the rehabilitation and reintegration sector with the major aim of leveraging our potentials to acquire effective outcomes.

This year, we shall launch a new strategic plan focus on our operation for the next five years, it is an ambitious and forward looking plan which represents the aim of the organisation to contribute to a safe and free society that upholds the dignity of a person. It outlines how we will be successful within a challenging non-governmental organization's setting. The plan was created to enhance the experience of our team, beneficiaries, key stakeholders and resource persons from other partner institutions that collaborate with us, and has been developed with their involvement and support through an extensive consultative process that also involved external partners and donors.

As we move forward, we shall continue to be at the forefront of transforming highly vulnerable individuals and communities, by identifying who and where they are, and proactively identifying and addressing the root cause issues to bring about positive change.

I wish to thank our development partners and donors for supporting the work of Advance Afrika. I also thank our board of directors for their strategic and technical guidance offered to the organisation. In a special way, I also thank our staff members for their dedication, hard work and commitment to change lives of vulnerable individuals and communities.

Rwankangi Ronald
Chief Executive Officer,
Advance Afrika





ADVANCE AFRIKA'S
**STRATEGIC
OBJECTIVES**

1

Transforming Vulnerable Individuals and Communities

LAUNCH OF THE DAY CARE CENTRE AND CACH DELEGATION VISIT

As a result of our focus on the special needs of women and children in prison, one child day care centre was constructed at Gulu Women's and another at Arua Women's Prisons with support from Caritas Switzerland. These amenities will complement the efforts of the Government of Uganda in providing 'special facilities' for the children of female prisoners in their early childhood development stages. This response was inspired by the plight of children of mothers serving prison sentences who need child-friendly environments for their development. The day care centre in Gulu was officially launched on the 11 October 2017 during the visit of Mr Hugo Fasel, the Director of Caritas Switzerland who led a delegation of four people, including the Head of International Cooperation, the Country Director Uganda/Rwanda

and the Monitoring and Evaluation Advisor. This visit focused on projects implemented under the Caritas Switzerland-Advance Afrika partnership. As part of the visit, the delegation met Mr Okot Solomon, an ex-prison inmate who has set up a community based organisation (CBO) in Ojwina division, Lira district. They also met the Uganda Prisons Service (UPS) leadership at national and regional levels, trained prison inmates and staff of Advance Afrika. The delegation highly appreciated the work of Advance Afrika. Their presence was an opportunity to strengthen mutual ties.

This response was inspired by the plight of children of mothers serving prison sentences who need child-friendly environments for their development.

CACH Director in grey suit together with UPS Director of Correction Services and other guests cuts a cake at DCC Launch in October, 2017





NEW GRANT €315,000

FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
UNDER THE EUROPEAN INSTRUMENT
FOR DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS
(EIDHR) AS A CONTRIBUTION TO THE
EMPOWERING LOCAL COMMUNITIES TO
PREVENT VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN
AND CHILDREN IN WEST NILE PROJECT.

▲ Female Inmates learning how to braid hair at Arua Womens Prison



CONSIDERATIONS OF WOMEN AND CHILDREN IN WEST NILE (ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE PILOT PROJECT SEFI AND SUPPORT FROM THE EU)

In an effort to address the challenges that female prison inmates face in the course of serving their sentences, Advance Afrika implemented a project named the Socio-economic Empowerment of Female Inmates (SEFI) in West Nile. This one-year pilot project was implemented in partnership with UPS with support from Caritas Switzerland and TechnoServe in Arua Main, Arua Women's and Koboko Prisons. Drawing the lessons learnt from the Advancing Youth Entrepreneurship (AYE) Project in the Acholi and Lango sub-regions, the SEFI Project took into consideration other social rehabilitation approaches with a specific focus on female inmates and their rehabilitation and reintegration needs. This project did not only increase economic opportunities for prison inmates, but also expanded participation in, and access to, rehabilitation services for female inmates. Three prison social workers were equally trained during the training of trainers under the Strengthening Rural Youth Development through Enterprise (STRYDE) Project facilitated by TechnoServe. These social workers later delivered the trainings in entrepreneurship and life skills to 122 prison inmates in Arua Main, Arua Women's and Koboko Prisons.

The trained inmates took part in a business plan competition and winners were awarded prizes in the form of start-up kits such as sewing machines, threads and sewing materials, beehives, bales of clothes and farming implements such as hoes, spraying machines and machetes to their start their own businesses.

It should be noted that female prison inmates continue to face double vulnerability – first as women and mothers, given how society perceives and treats them; and secondly, as youths who are excluded and so cannot have equitable access to economic and social opportunities. It is for this reason, among others, that women have fallen victim to acts of crime especially 'crimes of passion' like murder, manslaughter and assault either in self-defence or in order to fight back against unfairness towards them.

Advance Afrika also won a new grant worth €315,000 from the European Commission under the European Instrument for Democracy and Human Rights (EIDHR) as a contribution to the Empowering Local Communities to Prevent Violence against Women and Children in West Nile Project. This two-and-a-half-year action seeks to empower women and children in Koboko and Arua districts to live peaceful and dignified lives as they enjoy their economic, social and cultural rights. It builds on the work already started under SEFI. This project will be implemented in collaboration with Partners in Community Transformation (PICOT), an NGO in Koboko, and UPS.

CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION TRAINING

Though the AGEH Civil Peace Service advisor, Mrs Irene Erben Mukasa, we organised a one-week training in conflict transformation for our staff members and key stakeholders, including prison welfare officers, business mentors, selected beneficiaries and UPS leadership in northern Uganda. The training, which was held at Palm Gardens (Comboni Samaritans) in Gulu from 11 to 15 September 2017, equipped participants with basic skills and knowledge in conflict transformation and provided space for discussions on reintegration processes, thus allowing for a joint learning process towards strengthening support in the reintegration of vulnerable ex-prison inmates. Key elements of the training included communication and counselling skills, mediation, reconciliation, reintegration processes of prison inmates, breaking stereotypes, unpacking conflict, anger and stress management.

The training was facilitated by Mrs Irene Mukasa, Ms Rose Otieno of Centre for Conflict Resolution (CECORE), Ms Petra Fuerst of John Paul II Justice and Peace Centre (JPIIJC) and Mr Sebastian Oguti of the Institute for Peace and Strategic Studies, Gulu University, among others.

COMMUNITY DIALOGUES

Advance Afrika, in partnership with AGEH, JPC-Lira, Radio Wa 89.8 FM and Radio Pacis 90.9 FM, organised two community dialogues in Aduku, Apac district and Ediofe, Arua district. The dialogues focused on the relationship between victims of crime and offenders, their lives before and after prison as well as the challenges faced by women in the community and inside prisons. The dialogues, held at the grass-roots (village) level in Aduku and Ediofe, attracted community members, including ex-prison inmates, local, cultural and church leaders as well as Community Liaison Officers (CLOs) of the Uganda Police.

“

Key elements of the training included communication and counselling skills, mediation, reconciliation, reintegration processes of prison inmates, breaking stereotypes, unpacking conflict, anger and stress management

”

Some of the participants taking part in a group demonstration on how to help victims of conflict



The community dialogues afforded the ex-prison inmates an opportunity to share their stories of seeking forgiveness, struggles, lessons learnt and life after prison. It was also an opportunity for community members as well as leaders and people in authority at different levels to express their views and look for possible solutions to the challenges facing ex-prison inmates. The dialogues were recorded and produced by Radio Wa (based in Lira) and Radio Pacis (based in Arua), after which they were both broadcast to their audiences in Lango and West Nile sub-regions, respectively.

This is a follow-up to two other dialogues held in February at Pearl Afrique Hotel, Gulu and 291 Suites Hotel, Lira respectively, with key project stakeholders, including district authorities, police and prison officers, among whom were social workers, and selected beneficiaries to identify the gaps and challenges to youth engagement and participation. The focus here was on those who had been in prison with a view to devising means of breaking such barriers. During these dialogues, two reports commissioned by Advance Afrika regarding victim-offender relationships and community receptiveness of ex-prison inmates were launched. Recommendations have informed our meetings with smaller groups at the grass-roots level.

ICCO COOPERATION

In 2016, the Inter-Church Organisation for Development Cooperation (ICCO) contracted Advance Afrika to carry out research studies to deepen the understanding of the nature and role of skills development to enable small-scale farmers in Uganda to engage in effective and evidence-based dialogue with value chain stakeholders so as to improve their access to skills services and markets. ICCO is a global NGO which works towards a world in which people can live in dignity and well-being, a world without poverty and injustice. We carried out a baseline study on the 'Opportunities for Sustainable Food Production in Karamoja and Lango Sub-regions' as well as 'Promoting Skills Development and Market Access for Cassava, Maize and Millet in Karamoja, Lango and Teso sub-regions.'

ICCO Cooperation focuses on three pathways: i) Political space for civil society organisations (CSOs); ii) Realising inclusive and sustainable food systems; and iii) Small producers' empowerment and access to markets. The Civic Engagement Alliance (CEA) was developed in line with the Ugandan social and political context, past and current. The ICCO Consortium programme track record shows that it seeks to reclaim space for civil society through constructive dialogue concerning pro-poor food security and inclusive markets and implementation. In Uganda, the programme is intended to support the improvement of access to markets for small-scale farmers, especially for women, youth and disabled farmers

in Karamoja, Lango and Teso who have relatively constrained access to markets.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY (NEMA) (SHEA BUTTER TREE PRODUCTS)

In July 2017, NEMA contracted Advance Afrika to support shea butter groups to put in place measures for increasing income generation among rural women producers and processors of shea tree products in Kitgum, Abim, Agago and Otuke districts. We undertook a diagnostic study of the selected shea tree product groups in the four districts. The intention was to assess the nature and quality of the groups' work with the aim of establishing the existing capacities and gaps and making recommendations on how these groups could be strengthened to deliver on the project objectives. Thereafter, we developed a training manual to equip the women producers and processors of shea tree products with skills in post-harvest handling, standardisation and diversification of shea butter products. Further, we trained the women groups in post-harvest handling of shea nuts and butter. We believe that the use of improved handling and storage techniques by farmers will help them to better protect their harvested shea nuts from damage with the goal of improving on the quality of shea nut production and processing and enhancing value addition.

The Government of Uganda, through the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), received financial support from the Global Environment Facility (GEF) for a project on the conservation and sustainable use of the threatened savanna woodland in the Kidepo Critical Landscape in north-eastern Uganda. The project was implemented by NEMA on behalf of the government in collaboration with Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA), the National Forestry Authority (NFA) and relevant partners at district level.



Community members in Aduku, take part part in the dialogue in November, 2017

Achievements on Projects



EMPOWERED

716

YOUTH INMATES WITH
ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AND LIFE SKILLS

594

UNDER
SREE



76

FEMALES



518

MALES

122

UNDER
SEFI



60

FEMALES



62

MALES



REINTEGRATED

315

YOUTH EX-PRISON
INMATES INTO
THEIR COMMUNITIES
THROUGH PRE- AND
POST-RELEASE VISITS



HELD

04

COMMUNITY
DIALOGUES IN GULU,
LIRA, APAC AND
ARUA DISTRICTS



SUPPORTED

03

IN-PRISON PROJECTS
AT ARUA WOMEN'S
PRISON (SALON),
KOBOKO PRISON
(KNITTING) AND
ARUA MAIN PRISON
(TAILORING)



CREATED

02

MUSIC BANDS



SUPPORTED

306

YOUTH EX-INMATES
WERE SUPPORTED
WITH START-UP KITS

300

UNDER
SREE



26

FEMALES



274

MALES

06

UNDER
SEFI



03

FEMALES



03

MALES



CONSTRUCTED

02

DAY CARE CENTRES
AT GULU WOMEN'S
AND ARUA WOMEN'S
PRISONS



PRODUCED

10

REINTEGRATION
SONGS



ESTABLISHED

02

PERFORMING ARTS
CENTRE AT LIRA MAIN
AND GULU MAIN
PRISONS AND

ORGANISED

04

PERFORMING ART
EVENTS INSIDE GULU
MAIN AND LIRA MAIN
PRISONS



▲ Community members in Aduku, take part part in the dialogue in November, 2017

2

Business and Job Creation

MORINGA PROJECT

In August 2017, Advance Afrika acquired a 50-hectare piece of land in Awach, Gulu district with support from Caritas Switzerland to facilitate its dream of sustaining the organisation after donor funding has been wound up. The land, which has since been tilled and planted, is purely for moringa production as a social enterprise. This is in line with the new five-year organisational strategic plan that has been completed. This plan articulates the development of a comprehensive business model on *Moringa oleifera* leaf production (growing, harvesting and milling) and oil extraction from the seeds. To ensure and maintain quality, Advance Afrika partnered with Teso Enterprise Consulting and Marketing Association (TECOMA) and Africrops, a global trade enterprise with developmental and socio-ethical goals based in New York.

The moringa farm has already created employment opportunities for local people in Awach. It has thus promoted and increased community development by engaging the members in land clearing, planting as well as sensitising them to the benefits of moringa. As a result of this exposure and skills, it is envisaged that the local community will create jobs for themselves through investing in moringa growing and that, in return, we shall purchase the seeds from them.

“**The moringa farm has already created employment opportunities for local people in Awach**

”

LAUNCH OF PERFORMING ARTS BAND (GERMAN EMBASSY)

In September 2017, the German Embassy supported the establishment of two bands – an in-prison band and a community one – that were equipped with selected instruments. This initiative complements the two performing arts centres that were established at Lira and Gulu Main Prisons in March 2016 under the Economic Empowerment and Social Reintegration of Youth Ex-Prisoners (SREE) Project. The in-prison band, comprising both male and female prison inmates, was officially launched by Ms Brigitta Grossinsky, a representative of the German Embassy in Uganda, accompanied by Ms Elizabeth Nanfuka, the commissioner in charge of Social Rehabilitation and Reintegration, UPS, as well as Mr Ronald Rwankangi, the Chief Executive Office of Advance Afrika, during a performing arts gala at Gulu Main Prison on 28 November 2017.

The community band brings together youth ex-prison inmates, school dropouts and youth affected by the former LRA insurgency. Music gives them the opportunity to express themselves as well as build their identity and self-confidence. It potentially reduces delinquency and contributes to improved community receptiveness of ex-inmates. All this is part of an effort to complement the efforts and enhance the component of rehabilitation through the performing arts.



IN SEPTEMBER 2017

THE GERMAN EMBASSY
SUPPORTED THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF TWO
BANDS – AN IN-PRISON BAND
AND A COMMUNITY ONE –
THAT WERE EQUIPPED WITH
SELECTED INSTRUMENTS.



▲
First group of band members trained in the in prison band at Gulu Main and Gulu Women Prison





3

Advocacy and Creative Communications

AFRICAN CORRECTIONAL SERVICE ASSOCIATION (ACSA) MEETING IN RWANDA

Advance Afrika participated in the ACSA conference in Kigali, Rwanda in May 2017. Mr Ronald Rwankangi, the Chief Executive Officer, represented Uganda alongside some officers from UPS led by the Commissioner General of Prisons. The theme for the conference was 'Building a Professional Corrections System in Africa: A Strategic Objective'. Mr Rwankangi made a presentation on the contribution of CSOs towards correctional agendas in Africa, drawing lessons from Advance Afrika's work on the social rehabilitation and reintegration of prison inmates in Uganda and Malawi. In this presentation, Mr Rwankangi stressed that CSOs complement the efforts of correctional services because the government can no longer work in isolation.

Participation in this meeting was targeted at improving on our correctional agenda; improving our techniques for involving victims and family members of offenders in the reintegration of prison inmates; providing knowledge in the area of corrections; and creating an avenue for strategic networking with different players in the field of correctional management. The lessons learnt were immediately integrated into our social workers' interaction. The conference enriched us with the techniques of victim involvement in the reintegration process. In addition, research on victim/offender relationships as well as conflict transformation was enriched with the experiences from the conference.

The conference enriched us with the techniques of victim involvement in the reintegration process.



Advance Afrika CEO in a black suit (middle) with other panelist during ACSA in Rwanda

ADVANCE AFRIKA GOES GLOBAL (ICPA LONDON 2017)

The excellent reputation and contribution of Advance Afrika to the rehabilitation of prison inmates earned it an invitation to participate in the International Corrections and Parole Association (ICPA) Conference for two years in a row. The theme for the 2017 conference, which took place in London from 22 to 27 October, was 'Innovation in Rehabilitation: Building Better Futures'. Uganda was represented by the Chief Executive Officer of Advance Afrika, the Commissioner General of Prisons, and other UPS officials. Mr Omita, the former Commissioner Social Rehabilitation of UPS, made a presentation on rehabilitation in Uganda and recommended the working experience with Advance Afrika.

The conference stressed the need for tapping into technology and pushing for innovations such as long distance learning for prison inmates. Prior to this conference, ICPA contracted ITN Productions, based in London, to produce a documentary on Advance Afrika's work with prison inmates in northern Uganda. The documentary, entitled *Prisons: The Last Resort*, was premiered during the opening ceremony of the conference and reached out to the 700 participants from 100 different countries and an additional number of online spectators. ICPA is an innovative, learning platform, which enhances international and inter-agency co-operation. It promotes policies and standards for humane and effective correctional policies and practices, assisting in their development and implementation. It believes that imprisonment is a last resort and supports the development of alternative sanctions and community correction mechanisms. The ICPA event provided an opportunity for networking, sharing and learning, and gave Advance Afrika and UPS a chance to gain global attention based on the tremendous work that has been accomplished so far.

RADIO PROGRAMMES

The programmes were developed using a participatory and interactive approach with a central focus on raising awareness about the situation of vulnerable youth, women and children in prison as well as increasing the readiness of community members to welcome and integrate returning ex-prison inmates. The activities, which included testimonials, spot messages, live radio talk shows, drama series and broadcasts of community dialogues, enabled us to share the stories of ex-prison inmates, provide insights into the justice system, encourage community discussions as well as increase the capacity of community members to address conflicts around the reintegration of ex-prison inmates.

As part of an effort towards the fulfilment of our vision, we implemented various projects in 2017, such as the Economic Empowerment and Social Reintegration of Ex-Prisoners in Northern Uganda, the Socio-economic Empowerment of Female Inmates in West Nile, the Victim-Offender Relationships Project, the establishment of day care centre services for the children of inmates, and the performing arts and moringa projects, among others.

There is a concerted effort to rehabilitate and reintegrate ex-prison inmates. However, all these initiatives will be futile if the public is not involved in and/or made aware of what is being done and how they can contribute. In this regard, Advance Afrika entered into an understanding with Radio Wa 89.8 FM in Lira and Radio Pacis 90.9 FM in Arua to reach out to the communities of Lango and West Nile, respectively, by giving unique opportunities for individuals (young ex-prison inmates) to articulate their opinions and get their voices heard. These radio opportunities draw public attention to issues such as the challenges faced by ex-prison inmates during their reintegration into society, efforts towards healing and transformation (a journey to reconciliation) that need to be addressed and specific challenges faced by women in and after prison. The radio programmes greatly contributed to the overall goals of Advance Afrika's communication strategy.

Advance Afrika CEO, third right in black suit with other participants in London for ICPA 2017







4

Growth of Advance Afrika

NEW STRATEGIC PLAN

Advance Afrika has developed a new ambitious five-year strategic plan that will guide its work over the next few years. The new strategic plan outlines Advance Afrika's values and identifies the need for its work and the uniqueness of its contribution. It contains a detailed theory of change; the description of Advance Afrika's working principles; and its strategic goals, including the transformation of vulnerable individuals and communities, business and job creation, advocacy and creative communications; and the organisation's growth and sustainability based on the establishment of a social enterprise. The new strategic plan covers the period from 2018 to 2023. Its implementation implies a new organisational structure based on the formation of a business development department, the reorganisation of the programmes department, and enhanced capacity in finance and operations. The new structure will be strengthened by systematically building staff capacities in line with the new roles and responsibilities.

The process involved the staff of Advance Afrika, board members, the AGEH Civil Peace Advisor, two FK Norway participants and a senior representative from UPS. A series of consultations were held to ensure the participation of key stakeholders in the process.

NEW STAFF AND STRENGTHENING OF THE MANAGEMENT TEAM

A number of measures to improve the quality of processes, systems and structures at Advance Afrika have been put in place. As a result of the new strategic plan, a new staff structure has been introduced. Both of these allow Advance Afrika to operate in a more focused, efficient, effective and sustainable manner.

Currently the management team is comprised of the Chief Executive Officer, two Directors responsible for programme and financial and administrative obligations of the organisation, a Civil Peace Service/ Technical Advisor on peace-building and conflict transformation and two senior managers.

RESEARCH ASSOCIATES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS

Ms Kate Fassett (Programme Associate) and Mr Matthew Sebastian (Research Associate) joined Advance Afrika and have beefed up the capacity of the human resources. Kate Fassett moved along with her family to Gulu, Uganda from the United States. She holds a bachelor's degree in Psychology from Linfield College, and a master's degree in Social Work from Portland State University. She has worked in community, medical and school settings both as a counsellor and a social worker, and believes that the most valuable work is helping others. Kate also has a passion for cross-cultural experiences and has travelled, worked, studied and volunteered in Latin America and Eastern Europe before she arrived in Africa.

With her background in social work, Kate provides support in several areas, including developing a programme for the children's day care centre at Gulu Women's Prison and empowering prison social workers and business mentors in the Lango and Acholi sub-regions with guidance and counselling skills so that they can work effectively with our primary beneficiaries.



▲ Kate Fassett (Programme Associate)



▲ **Matthew Sebastian (Research Associate)**

Matthew Sebastian is currently a PhD candidate in Cultural Anthropology at Duke University in the United States. He has been conducting research in northern Uganda since 2009 and is currently working on a project researching on how young people navigate states of security and vulnerability as well as the consequences of humanitarian action in the aftermath of prolonged conflict. Previously, he has conducted research in Ghana, Kenya and Uganda on topics including memorialisation, humanitarianism, peace-building, contemporary politics and political violence.

In addition to his research and role at Advance Afrika, he also directs a small CBO in Gulu that engages youth in educational and collaborative research opportunities.

Sebastian has also been engaged in supporting field research for the organisation. He is also involved in photography for the organisation's projects. Matthew has dedicated time to helping inmates to develop skills in music. He offers drumming lessons to members of both the in-prison band and of outside bands.

FK NORWAY EXCHANGE PROJECT

Under the FK exchange programme, Advance Afrika signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Centre for Legal Assistance, an NGO based in Malawi, to enable the exchange of human resources with the major aim of building the capacities of the two organisations in reintegration. In April 2017, Ms Grace Mdokhwe and Mr Yewo Msiska from the Centre for Legal Assistance joined Advance Afrika, whereas Stephen Michael Ocaya from Advance Afrika and Ms Moureen Ninsiima from UPS went to Malawi. The exchange programme ran during 2017 only.

At these host organisations, the participants were fully engaged in the implementation of projects. As a result, they were expected to learn, overcome challenges and put the skills and experience learnt to good use in their future career growth and the development of their communities.

The skills, competencies and significant changes experienced by the participants included: building relationships with stakeholders; community

▼ **FK Participant, Grace Mdokhwe (Brown dress) takes part in post release visit in Paboo, Amuru District**



mobilisation; resilience; critical thinking; and understanding how local projects contribute to the fulfilment of the SDGs. The participants were also exposed to different cultures and new networks.

PHOTOGRAPHY TRAINING

Advance Afrika benefitted from the expertise of professionals in photography and clowning that greatly boosted the capacity of our project staff and stakeholders with skills in photography and physical comedy, which fosters the healing process. The one-week workshop took place from 13 to 22 October 2017 and it was facilitated by Ms Rendel Freude and Ms Kristin Kunze. Ms Kunze sensitised participants to the role of theatre and humour in rehabilitation as great contributing factors to healing and self-management. She further entertained female prison inmates in Gulu Women's Prison and Arua Women's

Prison with some physical comedy (clowning). The participants included our staff members, ex-prison inmates engaged in the photography business as well as volunteer business mentors, who gained valuable knowledge and skills in the concepts of photography, composition, camera handling, light and sharpness as well as exposure. They also did practical sessions in photography. Eventually, the participants showed their pictures in a small public exhibition. The knowledge of documentation techniques, including photography, is key to enhancing communication and the visibility of the work done by Advance Afrika.

Their intervention equally complements the efforts on the performing arts in prison under the SREE Project as well as the efforts by the AGEH Civil Peace Service on empowering prison inmates to acquire life skills, manage difficulties constructively and foster their healing process during their stay in prison.



▲ Ms Rendel Freude handing over Lumix digital cameras to AA CEO after completion of the one week training

STAFF RETREATS

At the beginning of the year, we held an annual staff retreat in Kabale district in the south-western part of Uganda from 1 to 5 February and later had an exchange visit to Rwanda on 6 to 7 February. The retreat provided an opportunity to reflect on past progress and achievements, and also to plan and to learn more about improving organisational efficiency and professionalism.

The exchange visit to Rwanda, on the other hand, enabled us to learn the different approaches to rehabilitation, reformation, reconciliation and reintegration of prison inmates and ex-inmates as well as those who have gone through turmoil, such as victims of armed conflict. The Advance Afrika team visited the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre and also

held a meeting with Never Again, a local NGO that works to prevent genocide, build peace and advocate human rights in Rwanda.

In November, we again held an FK experience-sharing and staff reflection meeting in Mbale and Kapchorwa districts of eastern Uganda to enable our four FK participants to share their experience of taking part in the exchange programme with other staff members and key stakeholders. The experience-sharing also gave the participants an opportunity to participate in Advance Afrika's staff annual reflection and planning meeting, which is part of its organisational culture.

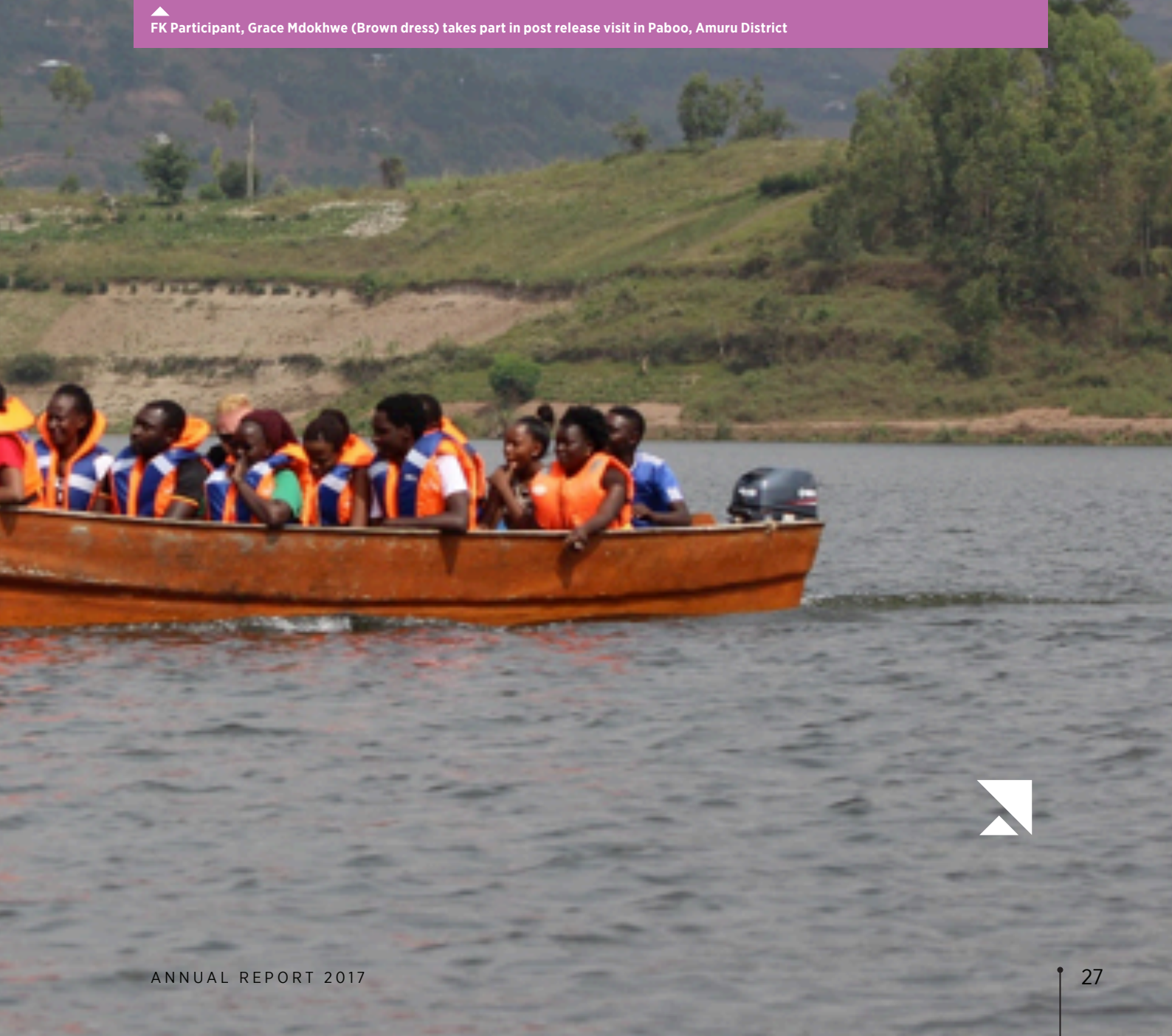
Both the annual staff retreat and the FK experience-sharing and staff reflection meeting gave our team members a chance to bond through several team-building activities, including nature walks in the forest as we traced the Sipi Falls, hiking on Mt. Elgon, boat rides on Lake Bunyonyi, games and gift exchanges, among others.

“The retreat provided an opportunity to reflect on past progress and achievements, and also to plan and to learn more about improving organisational efficiency and professionalism.”





▲ FK Participant, Grace Mdokhwe (Brown dress) takes part in post release visit in Paboo, Amuru District



5

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