



ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE PERIOD APRIL 2024 TO MARCH 2025

Objects:

The objects of Magalen Community Services (MCS) are:

MCS seeks to improve livelihoods of mothers and children in rural and disadvantaged communities in Uganda through planning and development of projects in the agricultural sector, health sector, education and employment. Our aim is to see a more economically empowered community, improved living standards and increased entrepreneurial skills initiatives - through business activities and saving schemes.

Activities:

In order to fulfil these objectives MCS supports the activities of a group of residents of Magola Sub-County. This group of dedicated and hard-working people act as leaders and facilitators for learning and development within the community.

In this year we started to fully transfer the control of operations to the office in Uganda, with the intention of completing this transfer in 2025-26. Trustees maintained oversight and leadership of the charity.

Consequently we are able to present a full report of activities, written by the local team:

INTRODUCTION

Magalen Community Services (MCS) is a charitable organisation that has been operating since 2012.

MCS aspires to improve the living standard of people in rural Uganda, especially women. MCS empowers women by providing a mixture of projects and promoting community self-reliance through skills training programmes. We work locally to support better quality health and education services, develop economic opportunities and increase the participation of communities traditionally excluded from power; and encourage equitable and pro-poor policies.

Vision

Economically empowered community and improved living standards.

Mission

To empower people by creating, facilitating and supporting projects that directly improve the development of the community and its members and promoting community self-reliance through skilling

Core values

- Responsibility
- Accountability
- Transparency
- Integrity
- Community participation

MCS core values are guiding principles and tenets that describe how the organization strives to operate

Activities and achievement

- Education.
- Health services.
- Agriculture and women empowerment.
- Menstrual hygiene.
- Human right.
- Environmental conservation.
- Supporting older persons.

Education

Magalen Community Services has helped advance education and to aid in the relief of poverty in Magola sub county, the organization has also helped to promote effective use of resources for the purposes of advancing education or relieving poverty in the sub county. MCS supports three (3) schools in Magola sub county, i.e. senior women teachers were mapped and trained on reproductive health and sanitary pads making, two pupils of Pajangango primary school received scholastic materials (books, pens) and uniform.



Senior woman teacher Nambogo
primary school



Jelik Nathan Obbo and
Gulasi Cherry Abbo
pupils of Pajangango
Primary school who
received uniform, pens
and books

Menstrual hygiene

Most girls during menstruation stay home because most of their parents cannot afford sanitary pads thus missing lessons, affecting their class attendance and eventually leading to school dropout, girl miss class attendance at least 3 days every month (total absenteeism for adolescent girls has risen from 7% to 28%). The situation is even worsened by prices of sanitary pads, a packet of factory-made sanitary pads in Uganda cost between UGX 3000-5000 (85 cents – \$1.40) far beyond what most families earn per day. The cost of menstrual products often leads girls to use unhygienic rags, unclean newspaper putting them at risk of infections i.e. urinary tract infection (UTI) or exchange sex for money to buy pads exposing them to risks such as early unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases.

Girls in Magola Sub County face difficulties in managing their periods at home and at school, in addition to lacking hygienic menstrual products, they often don't have access to clean water, changing rooms and most critically information about menstruation. With manufactured and store-bought menstrual products still financially inaccessible for most girls in Magola Sub County, Magalen Community Services has supported the disadvantaged girls by distributing factory made sanitary pads in Nambogo, Pajangango and Magola primary school, 500 girls so far have benefitted. MCS has also built changing rooms in Nambogo and Magola primary schools, and skilled 3 primary schools in the Sub County (Magola, Nambogo and Pajangango primary schools) in making their own reusable sanitary pads from cheaper locally sourced materials i.e. cotton cloth, polythene paper, liner, needle, thread and button. But due to lack of funds most of these activities could not be completed, Magalen Community Services is seeking for funds to support its activities in supporting the disadvantaged girls in Magola Sub County. Having safe and hygienic place to manage menstruation in school and the ability to make sanitary pads will help keep these girls in school; by staying in school the girls are bettering their opportunities later in life and skilling them will allow them to make menstrual health and hygiene accessible in the community.



MCS volunteer giving health talk to primary seven class Magola primary School



Changing room built in Nambogo primary school



School head teachers in Pajangango and Magola primary schools through one-day mentorship by our team, received skills in school leadership, accountability, planning and budgeting, and how to engage communities in school activities.



MCS going forward will focus on implementing new education strategies, which emphasise the need for quality primary and basic education and community engagement for girls' enrolment and retention. We will strengthen cooperation with other development agencies and CSOs to increase influence on education policies and their implementation. Programmes will continue to scale up work on improving teaching and education management, so more quality education services are available for the most disadvantaged.



MCS team
during dialogue
with both parents
and pupils in
Papada B village

Health services.

MCS works with health facilities deliver quality health services to the communities of Magola sub county, through working with Magola HCII and Poyameri HCIII mothers have received quality health services. MCS will continue to scale up its work in maternal and newborn child health, sexual and reproductive health and strengthening of community healthcare systems. We will also address the key social determinants of health such as access to clean water and sanitation, nutrition, health systems governance and the effects of gender inequality. MCS will also scale up its work with appropriate health institutions to build their capacity to support communities to hold health service providers to account.



Mid wife in Poyameri going
through ANC register

Agriculture and women empowerment

The Ugandan constitution guarantees equality in the right to work, equal pay, union membership, a retirement age of 60 years. It also guarantees women the right to maternity leave for 60 days with payment at a rate of (100%) under Article (3) of the Labour Law (2006). According to World Bank estimates in (2020), (49.3%) of the workforce are women, distributed by 77% for the agricultural activities, 3.9% industrial, and 19.1% service sectors, respectively.

There are several restrictions on the right of women to work due to the traditional view of women and social considerations. Women now occupy only about (20%) of formal government work, compared to (80%) for daily and private work. The rates of laying off women double as they are sexually weaker and unfit for physical work, building and construction works, mining, and because women are exposed to maternity and pregnancy. Women's work is limited to clerical and handicrafts, and nursing. Their work is limited to non-profit economies represented in agriculture, poultry farming, and food security crops. But cash crops and livestock are dominated by men. The percentage of men's wages in agriculture increased by (64) million dollars annually, but Women were burdened with responsibilities, unpaid and non-market jobs represented in care for the family.

Women constitute 51.5% of the total population of Tororo district, illiteracy rate is at 49.5% and 22.4% head households. 89.2% of the households in the district depend on crop growing and livestock. Magola women were expected to work in their husbands 'fields rather than grow or sell their own crops, MCS has supported and empowered women to own gardens and do work which were traditionally done by men i.e. owning farms, grazing and milking cattle, so far 10 active women have benefitted, they now grow crops and sell them, this has improved on their income and relieved them from depending on their husbands, some even have cattle they milk and sell milk. MCS will continue focusing on empowering more women by giving them farm supply i.e. seeds, pesticide and small start-up loan.



Nyakoi Dorothy working in her tomatoes garden



Nyakoi Dorothy standing in front of her goat's shelter



Nyakoi Dorothy in her banana plantation

Nyakoi Dorothy said that “MCS has given me an opportunity to be financial independent, I can now sell my produce and buy whatever I want instead of pleading with my husband”

School feeding

Many school children in Tororo district attend day-schools. Most of these children do not have lunch and yet parents expect them to perform well. In many cases, children leave very early in the morning without having breakfast and stay in school without hope of lunch from Monday to Friday. The data obtained from the district reveal that 80% of pupils do not get any meal the whole day. The teachers say afternoon classes are less attended than morning lessons, they wondered if any effective learning or teaching can take place when stomach is empty and rumbling due to hunger. MAGALEN Community Services through its school feeding program supported Magola Primary School by providing organic farming training to pupils, teachers, parents and school management committee and established school garden by ploughing two acres of land, procured maize and soya beans seeds. The school harvested five hundred (500) kilograms of maize seeds, but this a drop in an ocean, if we put feeding at a ratio of 1-4 (1 kg of posho for 4 pupils) yet Magola Primary School has more than one thousand pupils, which means 500 kilograms of posho will only serve pupils for two days. MCS therefore seeks financial contribution and any other support from government of Uganda, donor agencies, charity groups, parents and community for sustainability of this program.



Pupils planting maize and soya in school garden after attending organic farming training



Pictorial progress of Magola Primary School Garden

Community Empowerment

With increasing environmental degradation, food insecurity, and high costs of synthetic farming inputs, organic farming offers a viable, eco-friendly alternative. MCS mapped and trained lead farmers in organic farming. The project seeks to promote sustainable agriculture, especially among community members in Magola Sub County, through practical training in the use of liquid organic fertilizer and local organic input production.

For practical skills, MCS hired two acres of land and planted maize, this garden was used as demonstration site where all the skills learnt during training was put into use, however due to unpredictable weather and low price of maize, MCS is considering shifting to mushroom farming which is not common in the Sub County and the district at large, For success of this program MCS calls upon governments, donor agencies, individuals to offer both technical and financial support.



Organic farming training in Papada B village- Magola Sub County



Yield from demonstration garden

Human rights

The Uganda government over two decades ago ratified the United Nations Convention on human rights, and subsequently the African charter on the human and people's rights. In collaboration with development partners Uganda has improved on mostly protection and wellbeing of the child i.e. legislative policy and programme initiative that seeks to protect the rights of all children, the legislations like penal code act, judicature act, traffic in person act, institutions like police family and child protection unit have been put in place but still substantial number of children continue to live in situation of vulnerability, abuse and deprivation showing significant disconnect between policy intention and what's on the ground. MCS has been active in supporting and advocating for child and general human rights for the marginalized, MCS has been key in community sensitization, public mobilization and information dissemination on the protection of human rights through seminars and community dialogues. We have always ensured protection of human and people's rights through friendly settlement of disputes, urgent appeals, interpretation of provisions of African human rights charter to the community, and we have organized joint activities to raise awareness on particular protection issues affecting people in the community, through information gathering on human rights we have provided the concerned authorities with brief on the situation of human rights in the community and recommendations.

MCS has empowered people to know and claim for their rights and increase the ability and accountability of individuals and institutions who are responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling rights



Human rights stakeholders meeting in Magola sub county

Environmental conservation

The main source of income Magola sub county is crop farming followed by livestock, With the increase in population there is rising pressure on natural resources, wetlands in the sub county have faced encroachment occasioned by the need to derive livelihoods i.e. water and food supply, materials for construction, grazing and handicrafts. As a result of increased use of wetland areas, there has been an increase in the frequency of vegetation clearance, draining and diversion of water flow, crop cultivation, overgrazing, sand mining and exposing the soil surface to erosion, this degradation has contributed to the occurrence of floods, rising temperatures, prolonged dry spells, loss of biodiversity, pests, diseases and deteriorating water quality, among others. Unfortunately, most of these degrading activities are preferably perceived by encroachers as better livelihood opportunities than wetland conservation itself. The continued wetland land degradation in Magola sub county irrespective of the existing laws has brought unpredictable weather in the sub county as a result there is prolonged drought, food shortage, pest and disease. MCS has conducted activities to mitigate the problems associated with wetland degradation and restore wetland to its original status. We have employed a coordinated and co-operative approach involving all the concerned people and organisations in Tororo District and Magola Sub County, including the local communities.

Going forward MCS will focus on: -

(1) Developing public awareness

Very often wetlands are degraded because the public is either not fully aware or do not appreciate the diversity of values and functions of wetlands. Public awareness is therefore essential in creating a commitment and positive attitude towards conservation and sustainable utilization of wetland resources.

Magalen Community Services will promote public awareness and understanding of wetland resources, in this regard the following measures and strategies will be taken:

- (i) Design and deliver a Public Awareness campaign on wetlands resources in cooperation with other natural resource sectors of the district and sub county targeting such awareness at the wetland resource users.
- (ii) Ensuring that the public awareness campaign is integrated with other resources users' campaigns both at district and sub county level.
- (iii) Disseminating awareness on the importance of wetlands through leaflets, posters and radio spot messages and talk shows.
- (iv) Using district and sub county technical team to conduct village-based community dialogues.

(2) Capacity Building

One of the reasons for the unabated degradation of wetlands has been lack of community-based resource persons to manage, understand and give appropriate advice on wetland management. Strategies

- (i) Magalen Community Services will identify, recruit and train one resource person per village to manage wetland resources.

It is of vital importance for wetland conservation and management that the present attitudes and perceptions of community members regarding wetland be changed.

The older persons

In Uganda, the population of older persons is expected to cross 6 million by 2050. There are, however, several challenges facing the current generation of older people, the majority of whom live in rural areas: widespread illiteracy, landlessness, food insecurity, poor health, neglect and abuse by younger generations. It is important to note that these challenges persist in a context of structural poverty, i.e., where the majority are poor owing to capital-centric economic development, the absence of a comprehensive social security system and the poor quality of public service infrastructure.

One of the most critical contributions of older persons in Uganda is as primary caregivers of young children. Yet, while older people are providing care to their next of kin, there are no systems in place to offer them long-term care when the need arises. Older Ugandans are an important demographic group, not only because of their particular health and care needs, but because they have and continue to serve as critical resources of the country. MCS has supported five elderly women in Magola sub county by fumigating bed bugs, washing clothes and cleaning for them their compounds, Aketch Asinasi received a new mattress.



MCS volunteers
fumigating and
cleaning Akello
Edisa's home



MCS volunteers cleaning Akello
Namanyi Osinde's home





MCS volunteers fumigating and cleaning Aketch Asinasi's home



Aketch Asinasi's old mattress and new given to her by MCS.

Aketch said that "whenever I could cry at night something would tell me there are people coming to wipe away your tears, I didn't know it was MCS. I am very grateful and I thank MCS even in my grave"

MCS also supported the old person during Christmas by giving them sugar, soap and tea leaves



MCS team giving Christmas gift to Akello Edisa



MCS team giving Christmas gift to Namanyi Osinde



MCS team giving Christmas gift to Aketch Asinasi



MCS team giving Christmas gift to Phoebe Oburu



MCS team giving Christmas gift to Akongo Denzie

Funding:

Generous donations from our supporters meant that we were able to provide the services described above.

Public benefit:

All activities of MCS are carried out in pursuance of the objects as stated above and are for the benefit of the target community.

Income and expenditure:

Cash balance 1st April 2024	414
Income	
Donations	944
Expenditure	
Programmes in Uganda	220
Administration	0
Fundraising costs	0
Surplus/ - deficit	724
Cash balance 31st March 2025	1138

Approved by the MCS Board of Trustees December 2025.

Beatrice Akissa Herron
Trustee