Top Notch Community Development Initiative Ltd



Annual Report

2021/2022

Mpunga Zone Wakiso District, P.O. Box 800069,
Kampala Uganda
Emil: info@topnotch-cdi.org
Website: www.topnotch-cdi.org
Telephone +256772680454

Contents

Preamble 4
1.0. About us 5
1.1. Vision. 5
1.2. Mission. 5
1.3. Specific objectives 5
1.4. Organizational values 5
1.5. Approaches to programme delivery: 6
2.0 Top-Notch Community Development Initiative accomplishments 2022 6
2.1 Recruitment and induction of volunteers 6
2.2. Opening up upcountry offices 6
2.3. Introduction to the districts 7
2.4. Building partnership and collaborations 7
2.5. Fundraising 8
3.0. Baseline Survey 8
4.0. Community Dialogue meeting 8
5.0 Visibility 9
6.0 Developed different guiding documents 9
7.0. Different approaches/interventions 10
7.1. WASH Strategies 10
7.3. Youth Skilling and Livelihood (YOSL) 11
7.4. Formal Education 13
7.5. Child Safeguarding (CSG) 14
7.6. Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA) 15
8.0. Population Health and Environment (PHE) Model 15
8.1. The PHE Model 16
9.0. Human Resources. 16
10.0 Management, Finance and Administration 17
11.0 Lessons Learnt 17
12.0 Challenges 17
13.0 Recommendation 18
14.0 Conclusion 18
15.0. Appendices 19

Abbreviations

Top Notch-CDI: Top Notch Community Development Initiative Ltd

NGO: Non-Governmental Organisation

DCDO: district Community Development Officer

RDC: Residence District Commissioner

CCYA: Concerned Children and Youth Association

JEFORD: Joint Effort for Rural Development

PHE: Population Health and Environment

PSHEA: Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse

CSG: Child Safeguarding

WASH: Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

SDGs: Sustainable Development Goals

CSOs: Civil Society Organizations

IGAs, Income Generating Activities

YOSVLAs: Youth Skilling and Village Loan and Associations
VSLA: Village Savings and Loan Associations



Preamble

Welcome readers of this report. This Report gives details of the activities that Top Notch-CDI implemented during the financial year 2021/22 guided by our master strategic plan. The scale of activities in 2021 was limited because of the challenges triggered by the global COVID-19 pandemic that disrupted economies and affected community interventions. Nevertheless, Top Notch-CDI was still able to operate even at the height of the pandemic following the national guidelines/SOPs on COVID-19. This report is a public accountability and transparency document and enhances stakeholders' confidence and trust in our work.

Over this year, due to limited resources, we limited the scope of work in Lira, Hoima and Wakiso districts. We hope to strengthen our presence in Rwampara district in the coming year and other districts subject to availability of resources. Over the year, we achieved and learnt a lot together. We will utilize lessons to do better for our communities in the next financial and programme year.

Top Notch -CDI appreciates the support from all well-wishers, stakeholders including host districts, Top Notch host and collaborating partners particularly CCYA, Wakisa Ministries and JEFORD; civil society, and the private sector for their contributions towards what we accomplished. On behalf of management, I also wish to thank all Top-Notch staff who worked tirelessly to achieve organizational objectives. It's our anticipation that we will continue walking the journey together in the coming year. I believe that the information provided will be put to use by different stakeholders to make better the communities they serve.

Mwesigwa Robert J

Executive Director



1.0. About us

Top-Notch Community Development Initiative was founded in Uganda in 2018 & formerly registered with Uganda registration services Bureau as an NGO to become a legal entity in 2021. Its secretariat is in Wakiso district however, it currently operates in four districts of Lira, Wakiso, Rwampara and Hoima. Our focus is on; Youth Skilling and Livelihoods, Population, Health and Environment, Child Safeguarding, Water, Sanitation & Hygiene, Formal Education, Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse.

1.1. Vision. A world where the most vulnerable enjoy impactful and sustainable services they desire.

1.2. Mission. To provide the most impactful and sustainable context specific services through alignment with government and other partner development frameworks, community resilient building and people centered service delivery approaches.

1.3. Specific objectives

- To contribute to the prevention of communicable and non-communicable diseases among the vulnerable people in society
- To build resilient community level structures that are able to protect and sustain long term project and programme benefits at community level.
- Provide friendly, innovative and creative spaces for young people to develop their own talents so that they meaningfully contribute to the society they live in
- To contribute to the protection of the environment through appropriate human practices
- To contribute to prevention and mitigation of violence among vulnerable women, girls and children in society
- To contribute to education, employment, care and support and general welfare of OVC, people living with disabilities (PWDs), adolescents, youth, vulnerable women, internally displaced persons (IDPs), migrants and refugees in society
- Contribute to reduction of food insecurity
- Contribute to improvements in safe water, sanitation hygiene in society

1.4. Organizational values

- Professional & accountability
- Sustainability & responsiveness
- Value for money-result oriented
- Transparency & accountability
- People centered
- Partnership
- Last mile service delivery
- Non- discriminative & inclusive
- Non-partisan

1.5. Approaches to programme delivery.

1) Interventions are demand and evidence based driven,
2) Leverage partnerships, alliances and collaborations
3) Use holistic, multi-sectoral and integrated approaches,
4) Age specific, cultural and gender sensitive programming
5) Community led programming and implementation.

2.0 Top-Notch Community Development Initiative accomplishments

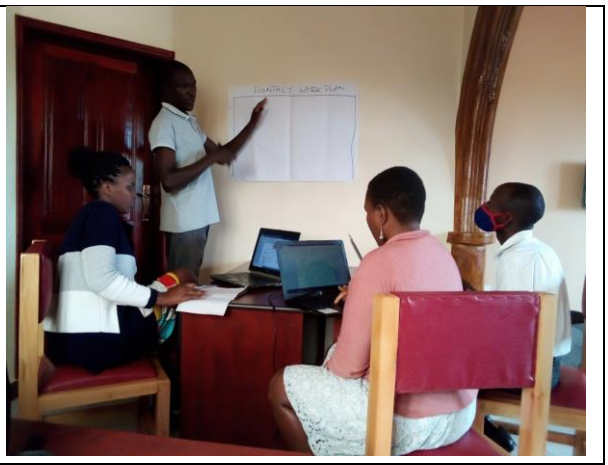
The following were accomplished during the year.

2.1 Recruitment and induction of volunteers

Top Notch-CDI recruited a team of energetic volunteers through a competitive process. The team were taken through a rigorous induction of four months at the secretariat after which they were posted to their respective districts, two in Lira and two in Hoima. Ahead of the recruitment an advert was put up and circulated through social media pages. A panel of 5 highly experienced representatives from different CSOs including the partners was constituted to carry out the recruitment process.



Photo during interview



Volunteers during the induction

2.2. Opening up upcountry offices

Offices were established in three districts of Hoima, Lira, Rwampara supported by the secretariat in Wakiso District.

	
Team in one of the district offices- Lira	*Field staff during a dialogue in Hoima district*

2.3. Introduction to the districts

Top Notch-CDI formally introduced herself to the districts. The field teams paid Courtesy to the different offices of the district; Chairpersons LC5, District Community Development Officers (DCDO) and Residence district commissioners (RDC) during which they were enlightened to the organization Objectives. The district leadership welcomed Top Notch-CDI and played to work together in the interest of communities.

2.4. Building partnership and collaborations

During the year Top Notch-CDI ventured in building partnerships and collaboration with local organizations in the different districts she works in. Memoranda of Understanding were signed between Wakisa Ministries and existing partnerships were strengthened with partners-Concerned Children and Youth Association (CCYA) in Lira district and Joint Effort for Rural Development (JEFORD) in Hoima western part of Uganda.

The partnerships have so far yielded positive results as Top Notch-CDI received support in different forms that has enabled stability in the districts amidst limited resources. The partners in Hoima and Lira have hosted Top Notch CDI and supported the settlement of staff in the districts.

Top Notch-CDI held a collaboration meeting with Wakisa ministries where the two discussed possible ways of working together. It was noted that Wakisa Ministries support young mothers who get pregnant out of sexual exploitation but does not take care of the needs of the children when they are borne. It was agreed that Wakisa Ministries would share information with Top Notch -CDI so that the children born out of sexual exploitation would be supported through among others formal, education, psychosocial support and health.

Top Notch-CDI is maximizing benefits as the organizations have different niches which are being taped into including the long term established relationships with the home districts. JEFORD has a rich expertise in responding to sexual reproductive health rights especially among young people while CCYA's has strong peer to peer approaches to addressing issues surrounding youth and children all of which are in line with Top Notch-

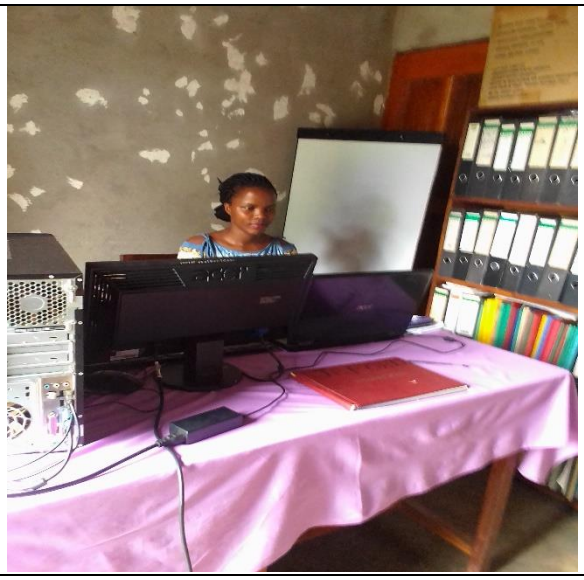
CDI's objectives. The partners have also been able to jointly respond to calls for proposals, some of which are in the process of award and others are pending feedback.

2.5. Fundraising

The team engaged in a rigorous exercise of fundraising during the year. Up to 50 proposals were responded to some of which the grant processes are under finalization.

3.0. Baseline Survey

Top Notch CDI started the process of conducting a baseline survey to be done in four districts of Wakiso, Rwampara, Hoima and Lira. The Key processes have been done that is the Consultant was identified, Inception report was submitted, and the tools are under review. Data Collection will be conducted in 2023. The baseline survey results will be very useful in informing Top Notch- CDI's program interventions as well as the key areas that need to be prioritized.

<table>
<tr><td></td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>Top Notch-CDI team listening to the presentation of Inception report</td><td>Field Staff in Hoima field office</td></tr>
</table>

4.0. Community Dialogue meeting

One community dialogue meeting was conducted in Hoima to discuss programme interventions and how they can participate in the implementation. 20 participants attended the dialogue and pledged to participate in Top Notch-CDI activities.



Community pausing for a photo after a community dialogue

5.0 Visibility

Top Notch CDI engaged a technical expert to design the organization's website. The website easily comes on the search engines, and this means that the organization can be visible to all searchers who may want to know more about Top Notch CDI. It has been easy for the team to refer different donors to the websites and other social media pages during fund raising. Additionally, All Top-Notch staff have been assigned customised emails to support their day-to-day work. The organization has also embraced the use of social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, and twitter. The organization is active in all the mentioned social media pages.

6.0 Developed different guiding documents.

The team developed different guiding documents including the community entry, mobilization and community engagement model, partnership framework, field support supervision framework, sustainability strategy among others. These tools are key in guiding other organizational processes.

7.0. Different approaches/interventions

Over the year the staff designed different approaches which will aid in responding to Top Notch CDI's objectives and have been the guide for resource mobilization. Master presentations on different models were put together by the team. Key programme areas being covered by Top Notch- CDI are: Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH), Youth Skilling and livelihoods (YOSL), Formal Education (FE), Child Safe Guarding (CSG), Population, Health and Environment (PHE), Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA).

7.1. WASH Strategies

a. Promote Community engagements for community ownership of WASH through formation water committees, maintenance router for community water points, Tip Taps for home hygiene
b. Creating awareness sessions about safe water, good sanitation and hygiene
c. Advocacy meetings with stakeholders to enable policies that enhances WASH interventions in communities
d. Top pads – Top Notch's Innovation for menstrual hygiene focusing on Adolescent girls and Young Women
e. Training communities on skills that promote both WASH as well as provide alternative income i.e., soap making, making smearing oil,
f. Collaboration with government and local council leaders including VHTs to ensure proper follow up on proper hygiene, safe water, use of Open Pit Latrine (OPT), utensils rag, rubbish pits in homes
g. Learning from experience program and experiences while introducing new areas of emphasis, these include greater engagement with partners in urban areas to ensure that children are reached.
h. Behavioral change communication campaigns in communities, schools, health facilities and churches
i. Capacity building of local leaders and representatives from other surrounding institutions to ensure that people have clean toilets and the general sanitation is good
j. Empowering communities to embrace better WASH services



Field staff during home visit on proper sanitation and hygiene

7.3. Youth Skilling and Livelihood (YOSL)

Top Notch-CDI continued to engage communities on YOSL intervention through;

a. Career guidance: Since Uganda's education system emphasizes theoretical education devoid of practical skills and training needed for the jobs, there is need of giving career direction to youth to embrace practical trainings and skilling which will make them job creators not seekers.
b. Private sector engagements so that the private sector embraces the need to support young people through job placements and other possible opportunities like crafts making
c. Integrate social and emotional skills: Social and emotional skills is understanding one's self and being able to relate with others. Top- Notch and the training providers should integrate this into the skills development program. 3
d. Training on IGAs, Youth Savings and Loans Associations YOSVLAs
e. Linkages with other existing programs including Government and Partners
f. Engaging youth in Agriculture focusing on Value addition

	
One of the birds with 12 chicks	*Youth skilling projects*

	
Patience Kancungura feeding her birds	*Innovative method of keeping 16 chicks safe from eagles*

	
Filed officer 2nd (L) guiding VSLA group on financial literacy	***Top Notch staff during the football match in Hoima district***

7.4. Formal Education

Top Notch-CDI continued to engage and sensitize communities on Education support intervention through;

a. Home first literacy approach where parents and caregivers are engaged in to be the first educators in supporting early reading and numeracy for pre-school children.
b. The Sinovuyo Caring Families model/Programme for Parents and Teens; this model is based on evidence-informed parenting programmes and appreciates the role of communication between the children and the parent/care giver.
c. Learning induction approach where early child hood development centers are strengthened through provision of scholastic materials.
d. Sensitization strategy where parents of the beneficially children, teachers, Community Based Volunteers and local council leaders are engaged and guided by the organization but also discuss challenges affecting children and their recommendations.
e. Capacity building to beneficiary households through skilling on Income Generating Activities to generate income for basic needs especially meals for children, school fees and other scholastic materials for sustainability.
f. Awarding best performing Top Notch supported pupils, this morale boosts and encourages fellow children to work hard thus strengthening high performance in schools.
g. Forming drama groups from beneficiary pupils, who will through singing, telling poems and acting at speech days and other functions, promote education while de-campaigning child labour and sexual harassment.
h. Fostering teacher and parent relationship. Strategies for implementing child safeguarding.
i. Community awareness on rights of children and wellbeing because this is the beginner of any implementation 'awareness'.

j. Empowering child protection unit in communities for them to have all the rights in carrying out the duties entrusted with them and the proper tools to be used.
k. Ensuring a safe community by advocating a thriving peace in our communities so that children live with comfort and sound mind.
l. Supporting the development of local by-laws and ordinances in line with children's rights to protect them.
m. Implementing and ensuring that laws are followed so that some individuals who would want to bribe the law are strictly followed up and made to serve their punishments.
n. Parental guidance on how to raise and understand children better for a better understanding between parents/ care takers and children.
o. Putting some whistle blowers in different communities who can alert encase of child right violation.



Top Notch-CDI field staff during home visit on first literacy approach

7.5. Child Safeguarding (CSG)

Top Notch-CDI continued to engage communities on child safeguarding intervention through;

a. Community awareness sessions on rights of children and wellbeing
b. Empowering child protection unit in communities for them to have all the rights in carrying out the duties entrusted with them and the proper tools to be used.

c. Ensuring a safe community by advocating a thriving peace in our communities so that children live with comfort and sound mind.
d. Setting of strict laws on people who commit offences in line with children's rights to scare individuals who would be tempted to do so.
e. Implementing and ensuring that laws are followed so that some individuals who would want to bribe the law are strictly followed up and made to serve their punishments.
f. Parental guidance on how to raise and understand children better for a better understanding between parents/ care takers and children.
g. Putting some whistle blowers in different communities who can alert encase of child right violation

7.6. Prevention of Sexual Harassment, Exploitation and Abuse (PSHEA)
Over the year Top Notch-CDI continued to engage communities on PSHEA through.

a) Using Art and craft to promote human rights including prevention of SHEA.
b) Ensuring national and international coordination for SEA and SH prevention and response in touch.
c) Strengthening local leaders and community leaders on PSHEA
d) Developing survivor- and victim-centered response and support mechanisms
e) Conducting trainings, raise communication awareness campaigns on SEA and Prevention
f) Advocacy and Campaigns on SHEA
g) Training SHEA champions that will report and safeguards culprits of SHEA
h) Empowering and training guardians/care givers different types of parenting skills like Authoritarian (care and love) and authoritative(harsh) laissez-faire (less concerned)
i) Developing mechanisms for monitoring, evaluation, and reporting on SEA and SH prevention and response
j) Establishing a gender-responsive monitoring and evaluation framework for the prevention of sexual harassment.
k) Establishing telephone hotlines
l) Empowering adolescent girls, boys and young mothers to be change agents

8.0. Population Health and Environment (PHE) Model
Top Notch's PHE Model is a strategy that enables communities to have access to health services including HIV. Malaria, TB, Mental health, SRHR, sustainable livelihoods, conserve critical ecosystems and manage natural resources at the same time all of which are key aspects of achieving the National comprehensive frame work and SDGs. It entails Biodiversity conservation, environment and Natural Resource Management (ENR) and Climate Change. Key approaches include;

a) Education and sensitizing communities on and participation in alternative energy sources like making brickettes, power saving stoves, biogas.
b) Advocacy for policies that conserve environment and subsequently checks climate change,

c) Engage communities on their roles local/ cultural leaders
d) Smart Agriculture i.e. agro-forestry, food trees, irrigation
e) Family Planning to control strain on resources
f) Modal family households' approaches
g) Recycling of reusable materials and conversion of non-biodegradable materials
h) Information, education and communication: Develop education materials on conservation and public health.
i) Community engagement meetings on HIV. TB, Malaria, SRHR, mental health and other health challenges and climate change
j) Develop successful partnership with communities, cultural leaders and local government which will help in carrying out community outreaches.

8.1. The PHE Model



9.0. Human Resources.

Over the reporting period, Top Notch-CDI management continued to motivate human resources both at the secretariate and district levels. This was done through providing weekly welfare support to meet the basic needs, weekly check in meetings to share progress and challenges as a way of remaining connected building teamwork and joint problem solving.



Staff after a meeting

10.0 Management, Finance and Administration

Over the reporting period, the Management held meetings to deliberate on the different organizational needs. The team continued to offer timely logistical support to teams to ensure smooth operation of activities in the different field offices as well as at the secretariat. The key issues discussed over the year include; strengthening internal control and accountability, procurement procedures and proper asset management.

11.0 Lessons

a) The impact of COVID-19 in communities is still noticeable -such as poverty, mental health among others. Communities are still struggling to cope.
b) Working with partners at district & National level has been useful in building synergies and leveraging on existing resources, this enabled successful set up of field offices, strengthened fundraising activities as well as built capacity of staff.
c) Staff motivation is important to harness their commitments to their own goals and to those of the organization**.** This was demonstrated through staff commitment in using their own personal laptops and phones to search for and respond to funding opportunities.

12.0 Challenges and opportunities

Funding remains a challenge to Top Notch CDI and partners, the organization has however been able to run its activities successfully through well-wishers, support from the board and its members, its New Funding Model (other ventures engaged in by associate organizations). The opportunities we have are that we have good will from communities, host districts and partners. Our interventions are relevant and meet the real needs and sentiments of communities we have. Our well wishers and private sector supporting Top Notch have confidence in the organization are expected to continue extending the support to move forward. Top Notch uses evidence to program and will continue to harness this strength to raise resources and implement programmes that are relevant and innovative to impact more lives.

13.0 Recommendation

a) Top Notch-CDI will moving forward explore partnerships to contribute to the mitigation of the impact of COVID-19 in communities through providing psycho-social support services including addressing poverty, mental health among others issues. Priority will be given to most vulnerable populations such as refugees, refugee host communities and women.
b) Top Notch-CDI should continue to be vigilant to ensure that communities are prepared for and respond to any outbreaks such as Covid-19 and Ebola to prepare and respond.
c) Top Notch-CDI should continue to strengthen community, districts, national and district level partnerships to advance the attainment of Top Notch-CDI's vision and mission
d) Top Notch-CDI should continue to build community resilience for sustainability of project interventions

14.0 Conclusion

The year has been a year of learning to Top Notch CDI's team. Team capacity and their commitment have been key in achieving all that was done. The team has been able to put in place key operational tools which has set momentum for takeoff. The key challenge has been resources and the team are working so hard to fund raise so that the organization's activities can be run smoothly. Our gratitude goes to all stakeholders who made us achieve what we have been able to accomplish during the year.

15.0. Appendices



Staff during induction training.



Field Officer during home visit in Barlwala village Lira district



Executive Director Top Notch-CDI (M) signing the partnership agreement with JEFORD.



Executive Director JEFORD (R) signing the partnership agreement with Top Notch-CDI



One of the witnesses (M) signing the agreement