

***“Tell me your story”*: Establishing sustainable, collaborative community development in  
Southern Uganda**

Ozioma Aloziem

Acknowledgment: I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the members of the research advisory committee that helped to shape and support this research project (Zimlich, Kneeland, Schatz). Their constant support, constructive criticism and guidance played a major role in the successful completion of this project. I would also like to thank the Bohemian Foundation and Creighton University for funding this community development research. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Jamie Van Leeuwen who never stopped challenging me and helping me develop my ideas. His encouragement, understanding and insight made this entire research project possible.

The mission of the Global Livingston Institute is to positively impact the health and vitality of communities in East Africa by informing and educating participants of the institute through research, exchanges of ideas and knowledge sharing. In order to accomplish this lofty goal, we first have to ask ourselves: have we first listened and learned by thinking collaboratively in the respective community, before together moving into action? Therefore, we must first engage in meaningful dialogue with individuals in the community. That was the aim of this project. Twenty-four face to face, informal, semi-structured interviews were conducting with community members of the Lake Bunyonyi in southern Uganda. Responses were recorded and analyzed using the method of phenomenology. We too often find individuals and nongovernment organizations (NGOs) wanting to be positive advocates in developing countries such as Uganda, yet critical research examining what members of the community themselves need is not being

## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

conducted enough to advise and guide this work. In order to meet the needs of a community it is crucial to determine what those needs look (Swanepoel & Beer, 2012) like. This project gives a voice to those that are not often given the opportunity to speak their respective truths. Ideas and resources must be exchanged to create a truly reciprocal relationship. This can be done by establishing open communication built on mutual respect and collaborative efforts. This project was able to create networks that could potentially improve international development in East Africa.

### **Research Questions:**

The purpose of this project was to interact with community members in East Africa to discern problems facing the community and how the Global Livingston Institute and other organizations can be of assistance. In order to meet the needs of a community it is crucial to determine what those needs look like. The primary goal of this research study was to listen to and document the needs and desires of community members in Entusi. This project aimed to gain insight into this particular community and create collaborative networks. The central research guiding this particular research project was this: What are the specific needs of the members of the Lake Bunyonyi region and how can we collaborate to sustainably address those needs. A research advisory committee assisted in formulating research questions aimed at this central research question in order to focus the scope of the research study.

The rationale for conducting this study was shaped by several important theories.

*Appreciative inquiry:* An approach that seeks to locate and highlight the life-giving forces of the individual, group or society's existence at its most positive source (Whitney, 2011). As people

## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

become actively aware of their strengths, talents and passions they are then able to act more effectively and deliberately towards desired objectives or realities.

*Phenomenology:* The method of phenomenology involves a way of contextualizing and conceptualizing the lived experiences of others as lived by them. The central idea is that understanding a person's experience often begins with the individual's own interpretation of events. A description of a particular experience is given and descriptively analyzed by a researcher for themes and underlying phenomena. Edmund Husserl is typically considered the father of phenomenology and argued that in order to thoroughly study a person's experience, one has to examine how this experience appears in the person's consciousness (Throop, 2012).

*Social Constructivism:* Social constructivism is another theory that shaped the theoretical paradigm of this research project. At the heart of this theory is the idea that individuals are active constructors of their social world. Society is therefore then seen as both a subjective reality and as an objective reality. Meaning is discerned from the environment and is then shared (Kim, 2001). Denzin & Lincoln note the importance of subjective realities versus objective realities. They state, "Constructivists are deeply committed to the contrary view that what we take to be objective knowledge and truth is the result of perspective. Knowledge and truth are created, not discovered by the mind." (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). This theory is related to this particular study in that an individual's beliefs about the status of their community are largely shaped by how images of success and failure are constructed in their particular culture. This particular theory is also very connected to grounded theory, an inductive methodology (Kim, 2001). This methodology first starts with a research question or the gathering of data from which a theory is then systematically created. This theory was used to shape the research paradigm of this project because I believe that cultural perspectives shape individual truths. In order to understand

## COLLOBORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

individuals you must first examine how they understand the world around them which is a major tenant of social constructivism.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

The researcher spent 7 weeks in Uganda exploring the cultural landscape. Extensive preliminary research was conducted examining cultural norms, practices and beliefs of the community under study. The aim of cross-cultural research is to examine different cultures in the most ethical and culturally relative way possible. This allows for greater depth of research findings and minimized harm to participants. A local community member was used as the main contact point and helped the researcher form relationships with individuals living in the region. This contact allowed for the researcher to be welcomed into the community which allowed for greater depth of research data. Twenty-four semi structured interviews were conducted with individuals living and working in the Lake Bunyonyi region over a period of six weeks. The sample size was limited to twenty four so that the researchers would have greater depth of insight. A smaller sample size allowed for interviews to span longer in time duration. Fourteen participants were male and ten participants were female. Participants ranged in age from 21-60. Interviews were conducted face to face and were recorded with an audio device. A translator was present for interviews not conducted in English. Interviews varied in time duration but were guided by a series of 20 core questions. On average, interviews lasted approximately 45 minutes. Convenience sampling was used to select participants for this study. Participants were chosen due to their ties in their respective communities and the roles they played in their village. Questions were formed utilizing the aforementioned theoretical perspectives. All participants were asked 20 questions that were formed with the help of a research advisory committee (see

## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

Appendix A). Questions were carefully crafted in order to address the central research questions while considering cultural guidelines. The research committee helped to make sure that questions were culturally relevant and respectful. They also helped to ensure that questions followed the theory of appreciative inquiry. The first ten questions were strategically made positive in order to create positive affect in the participants. Participants were then asked questions about their roles in their respective communities in order to in order subconsciously allow individuals to mentally place themselves in their communities. Having the participants recall the way they contributed to their communities allowed them to frame their concerns about their communities and respective selves. Responses were recorded and later transcribed for phenomenological analysis

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

The method of phenomenology involves a way of contextualizing and conceptualizing the lived experiences of others as lived by them. The central idea is that understanding a person's experience often begins with the individuals own interpretation of events. A description of a particular experience is given and descriptively analyzed by a researcher for themes and underlying phenomena. The intent of this particular method is to reduce the possible biases and preconceptions the person conducting the research might have. Edmund Husserl is typically considered the father of phenomenology and argued that in order to thoroughly study a person's experience, one has to examine how this experience appears in the person's consciousness (Throop, 2012). Supporters of this method express praise for the way in which it creates a framework for understanding implicit perceptions of illness or experiences. While there is much support for this method, there is also a lot of criticism. Critics argue that this particular method is inadequate in that it is too subjective and lacks an accurate understanding of implicit meanings (Good, 2012). While there are numerous ways to apply the phenomenological method, I have

## COLLOBORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

chosen the heuristic inquiry discovered by Clark Moustakas. This specific branch of phenomenology focuses on the complete totality of a person's experience and the various essences that create it (Moustakas, 1994).

### **Findings**

Before analyzing each transcript, I first contemplated and attempted to come to an understanding of my biases regarding the responses of individuals. I sought to address my various preconceptions about the problems that individuals living in the Lake Bunonyi region (see Appendix B) face. The recognition of my preconceived notions regarding this topic allowed for me to approach the responses of participants with a "clean-slate". The "clean-slate" allowed me to remove biases and accept the participants' responses as their individual views. The data analysis followed procedures of phenomenology as described by Moustakas (1994). First, I read the transcripts for overall understanding and listed every expression relevant to the central research question. The transcriptions were coded for significant statements or invariant structures, and were the words of the participants themselves. These statements were taken by me and transformed into meaning units. Meaning units represent the meaning attributed to the significant statements. Therefore, they become the first interpretation of the participant's understanding of their lived experience. The goal in these initial steps of analysis was not to disrupt the original meaning but to discern the meaning by reflecting on the verbatim statements. I then compared the essences and was able to find some consistently reoccurring themes in terms of the problems surrounding members of the Lake Bunonyi region.

### **Agricultural Concerns**

## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

All of the participants spoke to the severe hunger that many individuals face and prevalent lack of food. One participant stated, “*We have the problem of like staying for the whole day without eating or drinking*”. Another participant stated “*I can spend two days without eating.*” This was attributed to difficulty obtaining food and lack of agricultural resources. Many of the villages were located on islands with land not naturally suitable for farming. This was a significant issue for individuals living on Batwa Island. As one of the oldest people in Africa, the Batwa’s used to roam the forests and bush areas looking for food. They were originally known as “the keepers of the forest” and hunted wild animals using bows and arrows. They would also gather plants and fruits in the rain forest. In 1992, their forests became a national park and they were forced to leave their homes in the bush as the government wanted to protect the endangered mountain gorillas there. They were not compensated as they had no land titles. Field notes were collected during the visit to this village which entailed making a rather steep hike on an unpaved trail. The village contained one school, two teachers, and approximately 60 kids in four rooms. Individuals lived in small huts made of wood and plants. The individuals interviewed informed the research that the only way for members of the village to get money for food is if they have visitors which they seldom have. There were only three cows in the village and the earth was very dry with a significant amount of wild plants. The individuals that were interviewed were happy to have visitors but their overall demeanor was very somber and slightly subdued.

In order to have any kind of successful crop yield, fertilizer must first be added to the ground. One individual stated, “*The biggest challenge I have is that I don’t have enough animals. I have some land which needs to be applied with fertilizer. I am trying to see if maybe God can help me get more animals like 10 goats, so that I can take them back to my land and have more fertilizer. From then I can harvest good plants.*” If individuals are lucky enough to have their own animals

## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

they are able to produce their own fertilizer and use that fertilizer to grow crops. Unfortunately, many individuals are unable to own their own animals and therefore have to purchase their own fertilizer which many also can't afford. Fertilizer wasn't the only concern in terms of agricultural issues facing many individuals in this community. One individual stated, *"We don't have the farms where we can do farming."* As more interest is directed towards the Lake Bunyonyi region, more tourist spots are starting to appear. As a result, land that was once owned by village families is now being used to build area attractions. This is causing concern to individuals who have long histories on their respective islands and depend on their land to survive and flourish. One individual detailed this concern stating, *"The richer people are coming and buying the land here and that worries me so when my children don't go to school they won't be able to get good jobs and make good money and those richer people might come and buy my land which is not good. When I was still young my grandparents had big land. But now the land is getting fixed so now the worry I have is that we are trying to put more effort in education so that our kids can go to school and get more education and get good jobs in the government so that they can plan for the future."*

## Recommendations:

In order to alleviate some of the agricultural concerns of individuals living in the Lake Bunyonyi region we must first look to the issue of arid land conditions. There is not only a need for workshops on effective agricultural techniques, but also a wide interest. Individuals expressed a desire to learn effective agricultural techniques. One individual stated *"I would like to learn better methods of farming so that when I am here I can see how I can apply fertilizer and put it in our gardens and see how the crops grow."* Another individual expressed a similar sentiment, *"I would like advice about learning different types of farming. If I could find a conference to*



## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

*attend, like an agricultural conferences and visiting other places where they do more than me, I could learn more. But I don't know them so I do my own methods".*

### **Education**

Lack of access to education was a consistently reappearing theme. One individual stated,

*"Formally, I'm actually from a humble background because I'm from a family of 12 kids and among those 12 kids I'm the very person to go to university."* Another individual expressed a similar sentiment, *"Well growing up in my village was somewhat very difficult. Bringing brought up in a large family when we were 12 kids and when dad died when I was still young, there are some of our brothers that had actually finished secondary school level but immediately when he died they stopped from there. So the majority of them are uneducated."* Less than half of the individual interviewed received an education beyond P7. *One individual stated, "Most children don't go to school. Why? They say we don't have money. For those who try after finishing p7 they cannot go on to secondary school because they say we need money to continue with education. So maybe I would tell people who live in other parts of the world, we call them developed countries, if may a few sponsors could give clothing, books so that the children can go to school."* In one way or another, 100% of the individuals that I interviewed spoke to the importance of education. *One individual stated, "I could not spend two days without going to school though we had no schools here. We could walk miles and miles to go for education".*

During the time spent in Uganda, the researcher had the privilege of attending a Youth Summit that was hosted by the Global Livingston Institute. At one point during the summit, participants were able to ask one another questions. The researcher prompted members in the circle to describe one of their happiest moments. The Ugandan children in the group all spoke about education. They shared stories about how finding out that they had passed and made it on to the

## COLLOBORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

next grade level was their happiest moments. When asked about their more difficult times, they shared stories about not being able to afford school fees and how that was very challenging. A girl shared about her life and how her mom is the most supportive person in her life. Her dad was in the war and when he came back he was very different. He spent a lot of their money on alcohol instead of paying her tuition. She said that by the grace of God she was able to continue her schooling because of an uncle on her mom's side who covered her expenses. She said that for a time she hated her dad but she has learned to forgive him. She said sometimes she still holds hate but she is working on it. She spoke about education being the most important thing in her life and how she would like to go to university and become a journalist. One of the smaller boys in our group who was about 15 also spoke about education. He said that his father died when he was very young and that he lived with his mother for a while. He said he was going to school but did not behave very well. There came a time when his mother could not afford his tuition and so he had to go to relatives and move to a new school. At this new school, the one he currently attends, he turned his behavior around. He recognizes how important education is and hopes to one day be a doctor. The headmaster also shared part of his life story. He said that he was married and had five daughters but that things had not always been as good as they are now, for a time he was very depressed and suffered from alcoholism. He did not have any hope for the future. It got so bad that there came a time when he almost killed himself and his wife. This was a wakeup call for him. He dedicated himself to the church and has been working to do good things. He spoke of his dad being his hero and how he worked hard and pushed him to be the best he could be. I noticed a theme of education being the most important thing and understanding that it was the key to a happy or successful life.

## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

Individuals viewed education as a way to not only better themselves, but better their entire communities. They recognized that education plays an important role in breaking cycles of poverty. One participant who happened to be a teacher at a Secondary stated, “*“And I am telling the parents, please educate your children. These children tomorrow will help you. they will look after you. so those are the things I am trying to tell the people “*. Unfortunately, many are denied access to this important tool because of financial insufficiencies. Analysis of transcripts pointed to reappearing family histories of poverty. One individual stated, “*I had at one time joined the university for one semester but I failed because of financial problems, because my children were also growing.*” Whereas less than half of participants received above a level P7 education, only one of the parents of the participants received beyond a P7 education. This was attributed to lack of money for education.

Lack of money for school fees was not the only concern participants expressed about funding education. Lack of access to items crucial to receiving an education was a reoccurring concern that appeared in my analysis. One participant stated, “*Sometimes when we have not gone to work and the children come for lunch and they find there is nothing to eat. Another challenged is that they don't have good clothes to wear to go to school.*” In addition to finding money for school fees, individuals must also worry about purchasing school uniforms and school lunches. These expenses add up and often exceed the budgets of individuals living in villages in this region. This then affects the child's ability to succeed in the classroom. One individual stated, “*A child at secondary school can fail because he has no pen to write in a book.*” A headmaster at a local primary school spoke about what he was doing to address this issue, “*Sometimes there are students who come from needy families and are given support in terms of clothing after reasonable collection. They get some uniforms, they get scholastic material.*”

## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

Five of the participants expressed concerns about equity in the current education system. One individual stated,

*“The biggest challenge is school dropout at our school. Most of the pupils drop out. Like at my school, at the beginning of last term we had 610 students but now we 587. About 23 have dropped out. By the end of p7 (last year of primary school in Uganda) we find that like in this year we have 26 who are going to do the primary examination. We find that between 6 and 10 join secondary. The others just stay at home. So that’s a challenge we have because these drop outs will be a hindrance on the next generation. Perhaps if the government would help and give secondary education to all the children and then you will find that the whole community is literate. So advise the government to give us a system where education is equally given to the children. we find that the children of the rich children are the one who gain better education and the children of the poor parents, even if they are knowledgeable but they cannot join secondary just because the secondary’s they would like to join are asking for exorbitant school fees”*

There appears to be a correlation between socioeconomic status and quality of education in the schools in this region. Schools that receive the most funding typically cost the most money in terms of school fees. Those with less access to economic resources ultimately receive inadequate educations as they are unable to afford schools that have more resources. Socioeconomic status also influences how children perform in the classroom in other ways. One teacher stated,

## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

*“Mainly this is a village school. It is a rural school so the products we get come from deep rural. When they come here, you can see that they have different language, different accents. It might not be very close to yours. So those people have different accents from ours so whenever we are teaching it may take us something like three months, or the whole term to pick up the teachers accents because they are not used to it.”*

Individuals from the more rural villages are often disadvantaged financially and culturally. As they come from more rural areas, they are not as familiar with the languages spoken in more urban areas. Many of the schools require English be taught. Students from rural communities struggle with learning academic English and utilizing it outside of the classroom in their local villages where completely different languages are spoken.

**Recommendations:**

Educating a child is notably costly and many individuals in the Lake Bunyonyi region are unable to find the funds to educate all of their children. Setting up programs to sponsor children early on would not only assist families with schooling expenses but underscore the importance of education. If these sponsorships were contingent on not only academic success, but a willingness to help your community after you've finished schooling this would create a culture of high academic rigor and community outreach. While the government is making some effort to assist with educating the youth, more work needs to be done. One participant summarized this stating, *“Because they government has been passing through other regions and building some schools, some schools for example providing structures and sometimes provide a limited number of teaching materials. We are also hopeful that we should be considered.”* Shedding light on the

## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

lack of access to education in many rural communities might help to bridge the gap that currently exists in the literature concerning development in rural Uganda. This can be done by sharing the concerns of these individuals with those that have the means to such as government officials and nonprofit organizations. This could mean reaching out to people in different parts of the world, as one participant alluded to, *“we would love to have friends and these friends would help us to model these students and would possibly assist us in terms of scholastic material and would tell us about the outside world. Sometimes when we are here these students feel like they are within their own Uganda, that they are in a different world. They are not exposed so it would be okay if we could get these friends and that these friends would always share with us and advise us and help us.”*

### **Collaboration in communities**

Thirteen of the participants (54%) in this study spoke about the importance of collaboration in their respective communities. One individual stated, *“What can make the community better is to have the elder people meet together and share some knowledge and the youngest ones join education.”* When asked about their hope for their child another participant expressed a similar sentiment stating, *“I would like them to be positive villagers who can share with others what they think will benefit the village or the community.”* Uganda is considered a country that is inherently collectivistic. In other words, community members view themselves as community members first and individuals second. They recognize that in order to succeed as a community, they have to work together as a community. One village leader stated, *“We have to have meetings, we have to arrange donors, wait for some time and see how equipped we are in terms of finance.”* Community members share finance concerns, agricultural concerns, educational concerns, food concerns and health concerns. After these concerns are shared they are then able

## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

to receive assistance or offer assistance. Either way, these community meeting and community networks greatly improve village life. Another participant summarized the importance of collaborative community development exclaiming,

*“The advice is when you reach there, you associate with them or you make friendships with them. I can advise them to do some community work which are very lucrative to them in the future and their children. You can tell them always to love their neighbors, be friends, be developmental, to take developmental actions or projects by the government. I would always advise those people always to avoid war, avoid the conflicts in the society in the villages. Because at the end of the all, if they indulge in such bad activities you can soon lose your life. Work together! Get involved in developmental projects!”*

While collaboration with community members was widely deemed important, seven participants also spoke to the importance of collaborating with individuals that are not a part of their communities. One individual stated,

*“We would love to have friends and these friends would help us to model these students and would possibly assist us in terms of scholastic material and would tell us about the outside world. Sometimes when we are here these students feel like they are within their own Uganda, that they are in a different world. They are not exposed so it would be okay if we could get these friends and that these friends would always share with us and advise us and help us.”*

Another individual stated,

## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

*“The advice we give people who come to visit us, because they also have the problems of helping kids. When they come and find there is nothing to do, like no garden. We get one piece of land and give it to them to use it for one season and then they turn it back to us. It depends on the problem you have come with or the idea you have come with, then we sit together and share ideas together and see what we can do.”*

Six participants (25%) detailed the importance of effective leadership in communities in order to make sure that problems are being addressed and that needs are being met. One individual spoke about collaborating as communities by electing good leaders,

*“...work together because we have got the government down there. In the village, the government of Uganda it is managed by a group of people who are elected by the people of which we call leaders. We should elect good leaders to direct us to do good things to develop there area like putting up health centers to fight diseases. Like putting up good schools to educate our children. Like carrying out agricultural activities so that we can produce more food for the villages, for our children, and for our community and for the nation.”*

Village leaders are chosen by community members and serve as the spokesperson and governing head of the village. This responsibility can look any number of ways depending on the particular village. One participant stated,

*“I want to be a leader for the ladies so that when they quarrel on the way home like in the morning, we have the cabinet ministers around here. so we sit together and see where the problems are coming from and then we start counseling that*



## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

*person that was doing that thing so that again we come together and forgive each other and stay calm .”*

However, most village leaders are tasked with settling village squabbles, communicating with village leaders in other areas, welcoming new community members and overlooking the overall functioning of the village. After being elected, village leaders hold their position for as long as the villagers deem necessary. This is clearly an all-encompassing job that does not really come with training. One village leader stated, “*I would like to learn more leadership and how I can control my people.*” Another participant spoke to the importance of developing strong leaders stating,

*“...if they want us to be better, the leaders have to be educated. If there is something improved, the community or the village, first of all they bring those things. They make a plan or there is something that is implemented. The leaders have to be the first be. Then the people in the community have to participate and get involved. When they say that children have to go to school then that thing has to be implemented and enforced by the people themselves and the leaders so that it can be a must. If there is implementation of improved sanitization then that means every household has to provide certain facilitates to improve the health status. So it is in that process that a community can develop. If that thing is implemented and participated by all the people they have to improve and the community will be somewhere. That’s why you see some model places or model villages or model districts are there and you say this village is perfect. Educated children, in terms of health, sanitization is good. So that means that we strongly talk to the leaders to get them to help and participate and improve.”*

## COLLOBORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

### Recommendations:

Community collaboration is highly regarded in this region yet many villages lack the resources needed to stage effective community meetings. Designated places and pre-set dates for community meetings where individuals could come together and share ideas would be beneficial to all of the villages. In addition to that, workshops on communication and effective leadership could be helpful. Forming global community networks would also be beneficial in terms of sharing ideas and resources.

### **Transportation Concerns**

Ten of the participants (41.7%) expressed concern about transportation in and around the Lake Bunyonyi region. This concern affects village members in many different ways. One participant stated, *“When someone is sick here they have to inform me then we try to all the ministers and we can take them to a health center down on the lake so if they fail to treat the patient they refer them to a hospital in Kabele town. But we don’t have transportation from here to Kabale town so we just walk.”* Another participant stated, *“Now the other challenge that we face is the transportation. Now, this is an island school, only a limited number of students can afford coming to pay the boarding fees so the only option we always go for is that they cross in the boat.”* When it comes to traveling around the Lake, many individuals rely on small wooden canoes. This is problematic for many reasons. These canoes are small and unsafe, especially when the weather is rough and rainy. Many community members don’t know how to swim which results in high rates of drowning.

### **Health Care Concerns**

## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

Six individuals (25%) expressed concern about health care related issues. There was concern about access to health care resources as expressed in the following excerpt from a participant, *“When the people are sick in this community, if you don’t have money you go to the highland where there is a health center. If you have a little money and find that you can afford transport and some medication in town, you just sell something in the house and then you go to the hospital.”* In addition to concerns about access to medications where concerns about access to transportation to get to the hospitals and clinics. One participant stated, *“One day I felt sick and I tried for myself to get to the hospital and there was no one to take me to the hospital.”* Many village members rely on walking as their main mode of transportation despite health concerns. This remains true in expecting mothers as stated in the following quotation, *“If they are pregnant sometimes they go to the health center and see how the kid is feeling inside and they have to walk all the way there which is like 6 kilometers from here so they have to walk the kilometers and then they go to the hospital and check how the pregnancy is and then they come back.”* In addition to lack of resources needed to ensure adequate health care coverage, one participant pointed to the lack of understanding surrounding health care issues. They stated,

*“First these people have a lot of ignorance and don’t give us the right information. They say one thing when it’s actually the other way so that’s the first challenge. Coming with a disease, but then you give small treatment when they are having another thing so that’s also challenge. Another thing is that people fear to test. We tell them that today we are going to counsel you and test you for HIV and they say ah, no, no, no. some they refuse. Of course you cannot force someone to test. It is a big challenge.”*

### **Miscellaneous Concerns**

## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

Four individuals (16.7%) expressed concern about poor living conditions. One individual stated, *“I would like to tell people that come from outside of Africa that [we] stay in the thatched house which are not good.”* In reference to their concerns for their children, another individual stated, *“I would like them to have support and new houses so when they are sleeping they feel comfortable. Right now when they are sleeping they don’t feel comfortable because they don’t close.”*

Three individuals (12.5%) spoke to a lack of job opportunities and the problems that caused. One individual stated, *“Every day we walk into the community to see if there is work to do so we can earn a little money and come back and feed our families. Sometimes we find that there is no work to do. When we don’t have work to do we spend a week or two without having to anything to eat”*

Three individuals (12.5%) spoke to concerns about violence in their communities. One participant stated, *“The biggest challenge is that sometimes when we are walking at night we meet people that beat some of us but now we are trying to control that. We immediately report it to local leaders and they come and give us hands to see how we can solve those problems.”*

### **Conclusion**

**(need to flesh this out more)**

When analyzing the transcripts from this research study I found a rather gripping and honest telling of life in the Lake Bunyonyi region of Uganda. Individuals expressed concerns about financial, agricultural, and academic issues. There appeared to be pervasive poverty that influenced individuals in all areas of their lives. Lack of access to education, health care and transportation were also a reappearing concern. The central recommendation from this research

## COLLOBORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

project is that a strategic planning council be formed in address these concerns and to develop a five year strategic plan for the Lake region led by Entusi with a focus on: Hunger and Access to Food, Transportation Planning, Education and Leadership Development and Health Care Access. For additional research, quantitative surveys distributed around the Lake Bunyonyi region would allow us to really dig into each of these issues more substantively.

### **Limitations**

Sample Size: a larger sample size of community members in each of the villages would have ensured a more representative understanding

Lack of prior research studies on the topic

Self-reported data: as this particular studied relied solely on self-reported data there was a chance of bias such as selective memory or attribution

Access: Access to participants was limited geographically

Language: As many of the participants did not speak English, there was a language barrier that was somewhat corrected for by a translator



## COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

**Appendix A**

- 1) *Tell me about yourself. Are you married? Do you have any children?*
- 2) *What would you like people who live in other parts of the world to know about life on Lake Bunyonyi?*
- 3) *What would you enjoy doing every day? Why?*
- 4) *How would it affect you, your family and your village? What do you need to make that happen?*
- 5) *Tell me about a time when you were very happy. What were you doing? Who were you with? What do you need to have more times like that?*
- 6) *Can you tell me a memory that you have from when you were young?*
- 7) *What do you think your children's favorite memories will be?*
- 8) *What dreams do you have for your children?*
- 9) *What is your greatest hope or your children?*
- 10) *When you think about your life, what things do you want to be the same for your children? What do you want to be different?*
- 11) *Describe a moment you felt proud of something you did.*
- 12) *What do you contribute to your village?*
- 13) *How do other people in your village contribute?*
- 14) *What would you really like to learn about? Why?*
- 15) *If someone was going to move to your village, what advice would you want to give them?*
- 16) *Describe the biggest challenge you are trying to solve right now. What do you think is needed to solve this problem?*
- 17) *What worries you the most as you look to the future? What would put you at rest?*
- 18) *If there was one thing that could make your life better what would it be? One thing that could make your children's lives better? One thing that would make your village better?*
- 19) *Why did you agree to participate in this study?*
- 20) *What is your hope for yourself? What is your hope for/from Entusi?*

COLLABORATIVE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTHERN UGANDA

Appendix B

