

The Uganda Network of AIDS Service Organisations (UNASO)



Annual Report 2009



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ACRONYMS

AGM	Annual General Assembly
AJWS	American Jewish World Service
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
ASO	AIDS Service Organisation
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CSF	Civil Society Fund
CICC	Civil Society Inter-constituency Coordination Committee
CSOs	Civil Society Organisations
FBO	Faith Based organisation
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HIV	Human Immune Deficiency Virus
NAFOPHANU	National Forum of People Living with HIV and AIDS in Uganda
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
UAC	Uganda AIDS Commission
UNASO	Uganda Network of AIDS Service Organisations
UGANET	Uganda Network on Law, Ethics and HIV and AIDS

FOREWORD

I am pleased to share with you the 2009 Annual Report. This Annual Report is an account of activities that were undertaken by UNASO in 2009, and their outcomes. As a network organization, UNASO continued to take its responsibility in leading and coordinating the civil society response to HIV and AIDS in the country.



This year has had exciting achievements. The new UNASO Strategic Plan 2009 – 2012 was rolled out. In the new Strategic Plan, UNASO re-committed herself to providing: coordination, representation and networking among CSOs in Uganda, for enhanced quality HIV and AIDS service delivery to ensure a better and harmonized response.

Other notable achievements in the year included the coordination and harmonization of CSO voices and positions on various key HIV and AIDS policy issues, the sharing of strategic information around HIV and AIDS, and documentation of evidence to support advocacy efforts particularly at the decentralized level in Kasese and Kabarole districts.

By the end of the year, UNASO had facilitated the establishment of 44 district networks in the country. Although this expansion has, inevitably, led to a number of challenges in programme implementation, UNASO's commitment to coordinate the civil society response to HIV and AIDS in this country through decentralised response remains a key priority.

The achievements which we are proud to share with you in this report would, however, not be possible if it were not for the support of our donors: Concern Worldwide, HIVOS, American Jewish World Service and the Civil Society Fund. We are very grateful for this support.

We further acknowledge the contribution made by district local governments and civil society organizations in the establishment and running of district networks. This is a key milestone in our efforts to strengthen the decentralized response and is highly appreciated.

We hope you will find this report very informative as you read it.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mugisa'. The signature is stylized and written over a horizontal line.

Dr. Mugisa John Bitanihirwe
CHAIRPERSON, UNASO EXECUTIVE BOARD

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE



Dear partners and friends of UNASO,

I am happy, on behalf of UNASO Secretariat, to present to you this annual report. The year 2009 has had great developments and challenges. The new strategic plan came into full operation and all our work was in line with this plan. Two district networks, Amuria and Nakasongola, were launched, and other exciting developments have been registered. All of them are carried in this report.

The most evident realisation in the year is the need to strengthen the decentralised coordination of the HIV and AIDS response. We hope that in the forthcoming years we shall focus on innovations that will strengthen the decentralised coordination in a sustainable manner.

We are very grateful to all our partners including: donors, district networks, government ministries and agencies, local governments, civil society organisations and all other non-state actors who have supported UNASO to accomplish what we could in the outgoing year. Thank you also for supporting us to address the challenges encountered during the year. We invite you to accord us the same support for further accomplishment in the coming year.

The key challenge encountered during the year was the changes in personnel at the Secretariat, which affected programme implementation to some extent.

I salute the board for their leadership and the Secretariat staff for their dedication which enabled us to achieve the results of the year. The volume of work has been overwhelming, but they have worked very hard to register the accomplishments that we are sharing with you in this report.

We wish you pleasant reading and we look forward to continued partnership with you all as we strive to achieve more in 2010 and beyond.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bharam Namanya', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Bharam Namanya
Executive Director

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report covers activities that were carried out from January – December 2009 by the Uganda Network of AIDS Service Organisations (UNASO), and their outcomes. The report further highlights key achievements, key learning, and challenges faced during the year.

The reported activities were implemented to achieve the following objectives:

1. To enhance the capacity of ASOs and improve the institutional capacity of UNASO Secretariat to effectively coordinate AIDS service organisations for quality HIV and AIDS response.
2. To improve partnership and coordination capacity of 44 district networks through strengthening governance structures for effective and sustained HIV and AIDS responses.
3. To influence policy formulation for effective HIV and AIDS response through strengthened advocacy and representation at national level.
4. To improve access to strategic information and knowledge management among ASOs for improved, efficient and effective HIV and AIDS response.

In 2009 UNASO made considerable progress towards her mission. Notable achievements included:

- i. Supporting ASOs to harmonise their voices and positions on various key HIV and AIDS policy issues;
- ii. Fostering sharing and discussions around strategic HIV and AIDS information such as the current state of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, current HIV and AIDS bills and policies in district networks;

- iii. Supporting documentation of evidence to support advocacy efforts particularly at the decentralized level, in Kasese and Kabarole districts.

During the year, significant learning has been obtained on the following key issues:

- Participation of district network representatives in national meetings is aiding the appreciation of the various challenges facing ASOs in the districts.
- The regular identification and harmonization of advocacy issues is improving the quality of involvement of ASOs in the various district decision making processes.
- Information sharing meetings have revealed that there is a lot of information and experiences to be shared among the ASOs and also between ASOs and the local governments at the district level.
- ASOs have the ability to effectively participate in the various HIV and AIDS fora through representation, if supported to regularly consult and feedback to their constituencies.

The total amount spent was 1.28 billion Uganda Shillings.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Introduction:

The Uganda Network of AIDS Service Organisations (UNASO), formed in 1996, is an umbrella organization that exists to provide coordination and representation among civil society AIDS Service Organizations (ASOs) in Uganda. These organizations comprise of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), Faith Based Organisations (FBOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs) and other non state actors who respond to the needs of the people both infected and affected by HIV and AIDS in Uganda. UNASO's membership strength to date is over 1600 organizations with 44 district networks. In addition, UNASO is the secretariat for the Civil Society Inter-Constituency Coordination Committee (CICC) under the partnership arrangement for HIV and AIDS national response.

Vision Statement:

"A society free of HIV and AIDS and its impact"

Mission Statement:

"To provide leadership to ASOs for collective response to HIV and AIDS through effective representation, coordination and enhanced capacities"

1.2 Annual Objectives:

UNASO set to focus on the following objectives for the year 2009:

1. Enhance the capacity of ASOs and improve the institutional capacity of UNASO Secretariat to effectively coordinate AIDS service organisations for quality HIV and AIDS response by end of 2009.
2. Improve partnership and coordination capacity of 44 district networks through strengthening governance structures for effective and sustained HIV and AIDS response.
3. Influence policy formulation for effective HIV and AIDS response through strengthened advocacy and representation at local and national levels.
4. Improve access to strategic information and knowledge management among ASOs for improved, efficient and effective HIV and AIDS response.

2. PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES AND OUTCOMES

2.1 Enhancing the Capacity of ASOs and the Institutional Capacity of UNASO Secretariat

Strengthening the capacity of ASOs and UNASO's institutional capacity remained a core area of focus for UNASO this year.

2.1.1 The Secretariat and Institutional Structures

The secretariat was able to procure and install a server. The server is used to host the Local Area Network and internet, and this has eased communication and information sharing within the Secretariat and with external stakeholders.

The UNASO Board held a number of meetings in the year including the board quarterly meetings, the Finance and Procurement Committee meetings and the Governance Committee meetings. These meetings provided strategic guidance to the organisation through outputs like strategic plan, activity work plans, as well as policy documents such as procurements, human resource and finance management manuals. The Board also approved constitutional amendments as well as progress reports. The Board decisions offered strategic direction in terms of what the organization will focus on. These documents will also ensure effective internal control and good governance of the organisation's resources.

Both UNASO board members and the Secretariat staff held their annual retreats. The board retreat was held to examine and internalise the role of board members in pursuing UNASO's mandates. The meeting culminated into the drawing of an action plan for streamlining operations and communication between the board and management. The staff retreat reflected on strategies that can be embraced to drive UNASO towards its objectives such as teamwork, and harmonisation of personal goals with organisational goals, among others.

UNASO held its 7th Annual General Meeting. This meeting was attended by various stake holders including: representatives of district networks, international and national NGOs, and development partners. The AGM approved annual work plan and reports, and constitutional amendments.



A section of members who attended the 7th UNASO Annual General Meeting at Hotel Equatorial, Kampala, 26 February 2009.

All these activities were geared towards rejuvenating the structures and functional efficiency of the organisation. Through clarifying roles and putting in place management guidance tools, UNASO intends to be more dynamic, efficient, visible and leading organisation in coordinating civil society response to HIV and AIDS in the coming years.

2.1.2 ASO Capacities

Three district networks: Rakai, Nakasongola and Amuria were facilitated with office and logistical equipment (filing cabinets, desktop computers, office tables and chairs and motorcycles) to enhance their capacity for better coordination of ASOs response.



Delivery of equipment to Rakai Network of AIDS Service Organisations

Two districts, Kabarole and Kasese, continued to receive mentoring support supervision from the Secretariat. The two districts are running a project known as “Linking HIV and AIDS Policies to People through Capacity Building” -supported by the HIVOS- whose overall objective is to strengthen the capacity and coordination of AIDS service organisations in those two districts to influence HIV and AIDS policy development and monitoring. The support focussed on identifying HIV and AIDS policies available in the districts, sharing the availability of policies and disseminating them to various stakeholders, and engaging with partners and local government leaders and key stakeholders to address low uptake of ART.

The idea was to improve awareness of existing policies and/or policy gaps at the local level so that the communities are able to see how policy frameworks, where they exist, served them well or could be improved for the betterment of those infected and affected by HIV and AIDS.

The Secretariat trained 108 members CSO staff from 15 district networks in financial management and human resource management system. The trainees came from the districts of: Mbarara, Masaka, Ntungamo, Ssembabule, Bushenyi, Kyenjojo, Mukono, Mubende, Kiboga, Kayunga Tororo, Bugiri, Wakiso, Mpigi and Busia. The training shall enhance the capacity of beneficiary CSOs to improve on their financial and human resource management competences and systems. This way the Secretariat intends to improve functional efficiency of member CSOs.

Efforts were undertaken to strengthen governance in the districts networks. The Secretariat facilitated 35 district networks to hold quarterly executive committee meetings in: Adjuman, Bugiri, Bushenyi, Busia, Gulu, Hoima, Iganga, Kabale, Kabarole, Kaberamido, Kampala, Kamuli, Kapchorwa, Kasese, Katakwi, Kayunga, Kiboga, Kitgum, Kumi, Kyenjojo, Lira, Masaka, Mayuge, Mbarara, Moroto, Mpigi, Mukono, Nebbi, Ntungamo, Pallisa, Rakai, Sembabule, Soroti, Tororo, and Wakiso.

In addition, 18 district networks were facilitated to hold annual general meetings. These included: Pallisa, Mayuge, Kyenjojo, Kaberamido, Kumi, Tororo, Mpigi, Kampala, Iganga, Ntungamo, Kiboga, Bushenyi, Mbarara, Kamuli, Kabale, Bugiri, Busia, and Kitgum. Issues discussed included: the district network annual reports, the annual financial reports, proposed constitutional changes, and annual work plans.



The Mbarara District HIV Focal Person delivers a statement during the Mbarara District Network Annual General Meeting in December 2009

2.2 Improving Partnership and Coordination Capacity of District Networks

Improving partnership and coordination capacity of district networks for effective and sustained decentralised HIV and AIDS response remained a key priority area of focus for UNASO. Twenty three district networks were supported to hold elections to fill various executive committee positions. These included: Adjumani, Nebbi, Sembabule, Moroto, Kumi, Nakapiripirit, Kapchorwa, Mbale, Pallisa, Iganga, Kamuli, Kayunga, Mukono, Wakiso, Rakai, Mubende, Kiboga, Hoima, Jinja, Kitgum, Pader, Amuria and Nakasongola. Executive committees are very crucial in steering the governance of district networks, and the Secretariat undertook efforts to ensure they are fully functional.

Support supervision was provided to 18 districts networks including: Rakai, Soroti, Busia, Lira, Kitgum, Kabale, Ntungamo, Bushenyi, Mbarara, Kasese, Kabarole, Kyenjojo, Hoima, Jinja, Kamuli, Pallisa, Mbale and Kumi to identify and address governance challenges the executive committees encounter in their coordination role. Further more the Secretariat supported the orientation of 14 district network executive committees on network governance in the districts of: Kampala, Wakiso, Mukono, Kayunga, Kumi, Sembabule, Mubende, Hoima, Kiboga, Nebbi, Pader, Kitgum, Adjuman, and Pallisa.

The Secretariat actively participated in World AIDS Day commemoration and supported a total of 20 district networks to participate in events hosted in their respective districts. Seven district networks: Bushenyi, Moroto, Gulu, Kyenjojo, Kaberamido, Kamuli and Mayuge were supported with funds, while 13 district networks: Bugiri, Busia, Kabarole, Wakiso, Bushenyi, Pallisa, Mukono, Mpigi, Mbarara, Kitgum, Kabale, Budaka and Hoima were supported with promotional materials such as T-shirts, stickers and banners.



Commemoration of the World AIDS Day 2009

To scale up decentralised coordination of the civil society response to HIV and AIDS, two new district networks: Amuria and Nakasongola, were launched. The launch increased the profiles of these networks in the respective districts particularly among the key HIV and AIDS stakeholders. The events were attended by key district technical and political personalities, development partners working in those districts, and the district network member ASOs.



Representative of members ASOs march with a brass band to mark the launch of the Nakasongola District Network in November 2009.

2.3 Influencing Policy Formulation for Effective HIV and AIDS Response

The Secretariat undertook efforts to influence policy formulation to ensure effective HIV and AIDS response, advocacy and representation at local and national levels. The Civil Society Inter Constituency Coordination Committee (CICC) was facilitated to hold meetings on building consensus on the funding mechanism for the Global Fund, and the need to have more principal recipients of the fund for round nine. In addition, the Secretariat supported coordinators from three district networks: Rakai, Nakasongola and Pader to attend a CICC meeting which largely focused on the current state of the Global Fund round seven fund disbursements to Uganda and the status of the CSO second recipient for Global Fund round nine. The coordinators articulated the views from their respective network member ASOs in the meetings.

The Secretariat worked in partnership with other national level organisations - UGANET and NAFOPHANU - to jointly address issues affecting HIV and

AIDS service delivery in the country. A joint advocacy calendar to address key issues such as the ART crisis, Global Fund trends, positive prevention strategy, universal access and human rights, and the role of partnerships in HIV prevention, was drawn and various fora including the media were used to draw the attention of duty bearers on the agreed concerns.

District network executive committees in Nakasongola, Pader, Amuria and Rakai districts were supported to prepare position papers for discussion at the DAC/DAT meetings. The position papers focused on issues affecting the ASOs contribution to the district HIV and AIDS response, and on institutional issues affecting the district networks. However due to the non functionality of the DACs/DATs in almost all the four districts, the networks have resorted to other fora such as courtesy calls, planning meetings, district partnership forums and World AIDS Day commemorations to articulate their concerns to the duty bearers.

2.4 Improving Access to Strategic Information Among ASOs

Improving access to strategic information among ASOs was another priority area that the secretariat set out to focus on in the year. Ten key HIV and AIDS related policies and guidelines were sourced. These included:

- i. National Orphans and other Vulnerable Children Policy (2004)
- ii. National Condom Policy and Strategy (2004)
- iii. Uganda National Policy on HIV Counseling and Testing (2005)
- iv. National Policy Guidelines for TB/HIV Collaborative activities (2006)
- v. National Policy on HIV and AIDS and the World of Work (July 2007)
- vi. Communication Strategy for TB/HIV Collaboration in Uganda (2006)
- vii. Policy Guidelines for Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission (2006)
- viii. National HIV and AIDS Strategic Plan (2007/2008-2011/12)
- ix. Nutritional Care and Support for people living with HIV and AIDS in Uganda - Guidelines for Service Providers
- x. National Antiretroviral Treatment Guidelines for Adults, Adolescents and Children (2009).

These documents shall be summarized and disseminated to ASOs to serve as a quick reference resource for guiding their programming in the various HIV and AIDS thematic areas.

A report on civil society contribution to HIV and AIDS response in Uganda in 2008 was launched and disseminated this year. The report documented the roles CSOs have played in the national HIV and AIDS response

including: HIV prevention, HIV and AIDS care and treatment, social support for HIV infected and affected people, and institutional systems strengthening for HIV and AIDS service delivery.



The launch of report on civil society contribution to HIV and AIDS response on 29th September 2009

The Secretariat facilitated conducting of participatory research in Kasese and Kabarole districts to generate evidence based information that would assess change in the service delivery in the three thematic areas (prevention, treatment, and care and support) to enable ASOs to influence policy towards improving quality and impact of HIV and AIDS services. The findings revealed gaps in the provision of HIV and AIDS services in the two districts, and the dissemination of these findings was done in the two districts.

Twenty district networks were supported to hold strategic information sharing meetings. These were Bushenyi, Kitgum, Kiboga, Kamuli, Iganga, Kumi, Mayuge, Mbarara, Bugiri, Kapchorwa, Rakai, Kyenjojo, Kaberamido, Jinja, Busia, Ntungamo, Kabale, Pallisa, Tororo and Mpigi. The meetings focussed on strategic information such as the HIV and AIDS Control Bill 2009, updates from local governments on the status of district response to HIV and AIDS, and current trends in HIV prevalence and incidence in Uganda. They were attended by representatives from ASOs and the key local government department such as district HIV and AIDS focal persons, community development officers, and district health officers.

3 KEY LEARNING:

During the year significant learning has been obtained on the following key issues:

- i. Participation of network representatives in national meetings is aiding the appreciation of the various challenges facing ASOs in the districts. For example, the testimonies of the ARV access challenges in Pader and Rakai during a CICC meeting compelled the ASOs to write a statement to the Country Coordinating Mechanism demanding an explanation of the status of the global Fund round 7 disbursements that was meant to procure ARVs.
- ii. The regular identification and harmonization of advocacy issues is improving the quality of involvement of ASOs in the various district decision making processes. As a result ASOs and the district local governments are able to jointly confront several realities such as ARV stock outs, abuse of HIV and AIDS supplies and equipment in various districts, among others.
- iii. The quarterly information sharing meetings have revealed that there is a lot of information and experiences to be shared at the district level among the ASOs and also between ASOs and the local governments at district level. In addition, the interface between the district local governments and the ASOs through quarterly information sharing meetings is enabling ASOs to engage the district local government duty bears through articulation of issues affecting them. Likewise the local governments are able to point out gaps in the ASOs contribution to the district HIV and AIDS response such as poor reporting, among others. This creates opportunities for CSOs and local governments to jointly draw strategies to address some of the issues identified, leading into a coordinated district response.
- iv. The support supervision visits gave UNASO Secretariat and the Board an opportunity to interact with CSOs and other stakeholders at the district level and get to know of the coordination challenges. It was a feedback and mentoring opportunity for both CSOs and UNASO.
- v. ASOs have the ability to effectively participate in the various HIV and AIDS fora through representation if supported to regularly consult and feedback to their constituencies. This can result into reduction of the information gap among ASOs at both national and district levels. Participation in these fora has provided opportunity for CSOs to discuss common issues at national level that affect HIV and AIDS response management. CICC has, for instance, identified joint planning by CSOs as a way of enhancing a coordinated response to HIV and AIDS.

4. KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

- a. The network was able to support ASOs to harmonise their voices and positions on various key HIV and AIDS policy issues. Most notable were the second principal recipient of the Global Fund and the HIV and AIDS Prevention and Control Bill 2009. This was largely achieved through the efforts of CICC and the Civil Society HIV and AIDS Coalition.
- b. The network was able to foster sharing and discussions around strategic HIV and AIDS information such as the current state of the HIV and AIDS epidemic, current HIV and AIDS bills and policies in twenty districts. This has enabled ASOs to critically reflect on their implementation modalities and focus, and to work jointly with local governments for a harmonized response.
- c. The network was able to support documentation of evidence to support advocacy efforts particularly at the decentralized level in Kasese and Kabarole districts. This has enabled the ASOs and the district local governments to confront several realities such as ARV stock outs, abuse of HIV and AIDS supplies and equipment in various districts.

5. CHALLENGES

- i. There were delays in reporting and accountability by district networks which in turn affected timely submission of reports and accountabilities by the Secretariat to the donors. This led to delays in the disbursement of funds to implement programme activities. This had a negative impact on the implementation schedule resulting into failure to complete the planned activities in time.
- ii. There was enormous staff attrition which included key staff such as Executive Director, Programme Manager and M&E Officer. This negatively impacted on the rate of implementation of planned programme activities. More so the recruitment process for the replacement of the Executive Director, took considerable time.
- iii. The district coordination structures i.e. District HIV and AIDS Taskforce (DAT) have been set up in some districts such as Kasese, Mpigi, Bugiri, Kabarole, and Gulu among others. However, they are not meeting regularly thus denying the networks an opportunity to articulate their issues to the duty bearers. The networks are thus exploring other opportunities such as the district HIV and AIDS partnership forum, world AIDS Day, the budget conference, among others, to engage the district duty bearers.

- iv. The district networks heavily rely on the executive committees under the stewardship of the chair organization/person to provide them with guidance and planning. However there is a high turnover of staff among organizations that are on the executive committee particularly among the established national and district NGOs. This negatively affects the progress of the district networks. The new members have to be oriented to their organizations and individual roles and responsibilities in the district networks - a process which takes time.

6. FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

6.1 Income

UNASO received a total of UGX 1.2 billion in 2009 which marked a 12% decline from UGX 1.37 billion received in 2008. Civil Society Fund (CSF) was the largest contributor with 74%.

During the year, grants amounting to 27million were availed to 12 Community Based Organizations (CBOs) to improve their technical competences in programme management particularly in planning and monitoring. The sub granting scheme to CBOs was funded by the American Jewish World Services (AJWS).

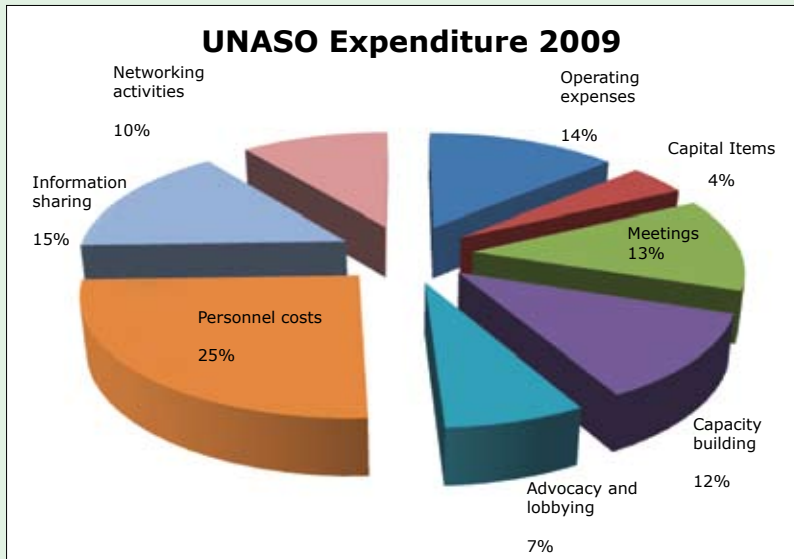
The Institute of Public Health (IPH) granted UGX 4,738,000 for a project entitled "Building capacity of the District networks to monitor and report on the performance of AIDS Service Organizations in Rakai district network"

A table showing Income Sources:

Funding Source	Amount
Civil Society Fund	890,469,975
American Jewish World Service	59,707,500
Concern Worldwide	88,716,117
HIVOS	165,900,000
Institute of Public Health	4,738,000
Membership subscriptions	1,940,000
Total	1,211,471,592

6.2 Expenditure

The total expenditure in 2009 was UGX 1.28 billion.



Capital items accounted for 4% of the total expenditure in 2009: motorcycles, furniture and computers were procured for three district networks supported by Concern Worldwide and a network server was procured for the Secretariat to improve information sharing with the networks.

UNASO Board Members as of December 2009

1.	Dr. John Mugisa	Chairperson
2.	Rev Jackson Muteeba	Vice Chairperson/ Treasurer
3.	Mr. Emanuel Ofumbi	Chairperson Governance Committee
4.	Dr. Byaruhanga Raymond	Board Member
5.	Mr Sebuliba Michael	Board Member
6.	Mr Kabanda Obed	Board Member
7.	Mr William Kabiyaamba	Board Member
8.	Ms Margaret Muzaki	Board Member
9.	Ms Robina Ssentongo	Board Member
10.	Ms Apea Agnes	Board Member
11.	Dr. Steven Watiti	Board Member
12.	Mr Bharam Namanya	Secretary /Ex-officio
13.	Dr Stella Tibumanywa	Board Member

UNASO Secretariat Staff Members as of December 2009

1.	Bharam Namanya	Executive Director
2.	Cherry Kusemererwa	Finance and Administration Manager
3.	Stephen Alege	Networking and Partnership Officer
4.	Florence Ayo	Advocacy Officer
5.	Richard Mayanja	Information Officer
6.	Geoffrey Musinguzi	Accounts Assistance
6.	Irene Basemera	Administrative Assistant
7.	Paul Kigigi	Driver
8.	Siraje Kakaire	Driver



Plot 190 Kiira Road, Ntinda.
P.O Box 27346 Kampala-Uganda
Tel: 256 414 274730;
Mob: 256 772 486 507.
E-mail: unaso@unaso.or.ug
Website: www.unaso.or.ug